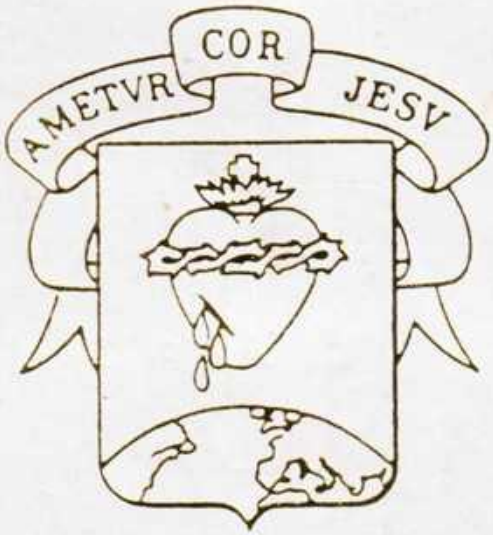
PLUS FIFTY

ANOTHER HALF-CENTURY
OF SERVICE
1947-1997



THE BROTHERS
OF
THE SACRED HEART

PLUS FIFTY

A Volume Celebrating the Sesquicentennial
of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart
in America
in
the United States
and the New Orleans Provinces

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FOREWORD

June 17, 1996 Rome, Italy

Dear Brothers and Friends,

On this date, the feast of the Sacred Heart one hundred and fifty years ago, Venerable Brother Polycarp made an historic announcement to the brothers in France: *"Counting on your zeal, your dedication, and your generosity, I have just promised five brothers to work in the vast diocese of a worthy bishop in America."* To buttress his bold act of faith that would rally brothers *"to sacrifice country, friends, parents, and comforts to discover in faraway places the inexhaustible treasures of the Heart of Jesus,"* the young superior general organized a prayer appeal in the brothers' houses and in the novitiate.

The effect of his faith and the brothers' prayers has now lasted 150 years. Brother Polycarp knew in advance what this volume and its predecessor, *A Century of Service*, would recount only in retrospect, namely that *"zeal, dedication, and generosity"* are abundantly present in the men who wrote our sesquicentennial story with their lives.

What Brother Polycarp defined as zeal our Rule now calls a sense of mission. The following pages are filled with evidence that the driving sense of mission brought over to America by the French brothers and instilled in their American counterparts led them to form deep attachments to the schools, students, people and places that welcomed them. It is that same sense of mission that motivates the brothers in what is now the New Orleans Province to share their educational charism with their lay colleagues.

Dedication, the second quality Brother Polycarp foresaw in the first missionaries, is expressed in our Rule today as *"perseverance with faith and confidence."* This history of the past fifty years describes frequent and practical efforts by brothers to overcome obstacles, to adapt to changing needs, and to intensify the province's dynamism.

The generosity which Brother Polycarp saw in our French predecessors is also manifest in this account of the last fifty years. The achievements of the men described in these pages exceeded their human limits. Teaching brothers'

effectiveness surpassed their level of professional preparation. Principals stretched meager resources. Those serving in authority often jeopardized their health to respond to the province's needs. Lay colleagues and benefactors poured out their support in heaping measure. All invested copiously of their time.

The Institute owes a debt of thanks to Brother Xavier Werneth for seeing *Plus Fifty* through to its completion. Between the lines he has written we can see his characteristic love for the heritage of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the New Orleans Province. As I read his proofs, I not only felt proud as an heir to Brother Polycarp's zeal, dedication, and generosity, but also I felt grateful to count myself as a brother to the pioneers, leaders, giants, educators, saints, prophets, and mentors who cooperated with God's action in the lives of countless young people over the past fifty years.

Brother Bernard Couvillion, SC

Superior General

INTRODUCTION

PLUS FIFTY

In the preface to *A Century of Service*, Brother Albertinus, superior general and former provincial of the United States, wrote, *"Onward, my dear Brothers, for another century of splendid religious life and of devoted labor for the spiritual and temporal welfare of youth and for the greater glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."* This present volume entitled *Plus Fifty* picks up where that history left off, telling the story of another 50 years of the brothers' religious life and dedicated service to youth from 1947 to the present.

While this book does not pretend to imitate the classic style or eloquent manner of Brother Macarius's monumental work, it follows the same basic three-part organizational pattern and approach. Part One is a general introduction briefly summarizing the first 100 years of service of the brothers in the United States, culminating in their 1947 centennial celebration. Part Two treats each provincial administration and tries to capture the highlights of each period and consider them in the context of the wider Church, the Institute at large, and American society. This part emphasizes the lived experience of the brothers, especially as they encountered drastic changes in their religious life after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Thus, Part Two receives more attention than in Brother Macarius's book. Part Three continues the history of the brothers' ministries, focusing on the schools and the significant roles of brothers in them since 1947. Where appropriate, it summarizes their earlier history.

Documented Sources

When Brother Macarius began his work, he found scanty resources in unorganized province archives. This paucity of detail held especially true for the first 50 years covered in his history. Those records that did survive lay scattered about, part of a trail left behind by provincial moves from Mobile to Indianapolis to Metuchen and then to New Orleans. Starting with the journal of Brother Athanasius Faugier, one of the first five pioneers and the second provincial (1865-1900), as well as the historical notes gathered up by Brother Isidore Balmadier, the fourth provincial (1903-1912), Brother Macarius

patiently assembled the early history of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart by corresponding with many brothers and heads of diocesan archives. For the later years, he had access to the *Annuaires*, yearly histories of the Institute, beginning with the school year 1906-07.

For this present work, I have had access to many sources. To document the story where necessary, I made extensive use of the archives of the New Orleans Province, as well as those of the Institute in Rome. Those archives provided minutes of the provincial and general councils, bound copies of the acts of the provincial and general chapters, reports of canonical visitations, annual reports made by provincial superiors to the superior general, bound volumes of the circular letters written by provincials to the brothers, and correspondence files of the provincials and superiors general. These correspondence files provided many helpful insights.

In addition, regular publications such as the *Annuaires* of the Institute and *The Brothers of the Sacred Heart*, commonly called the *Province Monthly*, between the years 1948 and 1967, yielded valuable information for this work. Other publications in book form record some aspects of the history of the province since 1947. *Plus Fifty* builds on them, without repeating unnecessarily. Brother Geoffrey Kerwin's *Reflections: East Africa The Harvest, 1931-1981* provides a thorough chronicle of the missions from the first foundation in Uganda. The present work continues the story in Africa where that book left off. Likewise, since biographies of deceased brothers have been capsulated in *Lives of the Brothers: 1847-1986* and reported extensively in the *Annuaires*, this history does not focus on the lives of individual brothers.

Lived Experience

With any history, objectivity can be problematic, especially a history covering a time frame in which the author has played a role. In telling the story as it actually happened without compromising the truth, I attempted not to offend the sensitivities of those persons still living, whether they be brothers, church authorities, lay collaborators, benefactors, or former students. I have tried to record not just the details of well-documented events, but also their impact on the life of the province. Such important events and their effects find their clearest expression in the memories and perceptions of the brothers, or in other words, in their lived experience.

For Part Two, "Provincials," I relied above all on the lived experience of the brothers who have so graciously shared their memories. Each brother was

invited to submit a few words or phrases to characterize the life of the province, its spirit, its signature events, and its struggles during the terms of various provincials. I have incorporated these many responses into the history, usually without giving credit, since most brothers preferred that their names not be mentioned and that they not be quoted directly. In addition, Brother Bernard Couvillion, provincial when this work began, interviewed several past provincials and administrators to obtain their insights into important subject areas.

In Part Three, "Ministries," I have focused on the brothers' ministries in the schools, including major constructions or improvements to the physical plants, purchase of properties, contracts with dioceses where applicable, educational achievements and program development, honors received, outstanding accomplishments of the faculty, major policy changes, as well as other struggles and successes. But Part Three is not so much a complete history of each school as it is the story of the brothers in those schools and how they made them what they are today. For this section, I invited administrators of the brothers' schools to submit materials covering the history and spirit of their schools during the past 50 years.

Author's Comments

In writing the present book, I had in mind primarily the brothers in the New Orleans Province as its reading audience. Thus, the story will sometimes go behind the scenes of the happenings themselves to touch upon the interior workings of province and community life and the impact of events on the lives of the brothers. However, realizing that many friends and relatives of the brothers will be interested in reading the account, I have tried not to take too much for granted and to explain technical terms touching on religious life in such a way that all can understand. For ease in reading, source references have been incorporated into the text itself wherever possible.

I am especially grateful for the constant support, encouragement, and assistance of Brother Bernard Couvillion, who as provincial invited me in November 1992 to undertake this project. I am also thankful for the able assistance of several people. Brother Matthias Amos carefully read the text for accuracy and offered many suggestions for improvement. Dr. William A. Bergeron, Brother Adrian Gaudin, Brother Ray Hebert, and Dr. Perry Brandao provided invaluable help in editing and proofreading the final text.

Finally I would like to say that writing *Plus Fifty* has been a work of love. While the research and actual writing over a four-year period were at times tedious, the rewards have been great. I have grown to a much deeper love and appreciation for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. I am proud of them, not only for their outstanding accomplishments in their various schools, but also for the manner in which they have lived out their religious commitments during difficult periods in history. Also I am proud of the leadership of the provincials over the past 50 years. Graced by the Spirit, each in his own way inspired the brothers according to the needs of the time and motivated them to grow in their commitment to religious life, translating their love for God and neighbor into practical services in the formation of young people.

Brother Xavier Werneth, SC

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

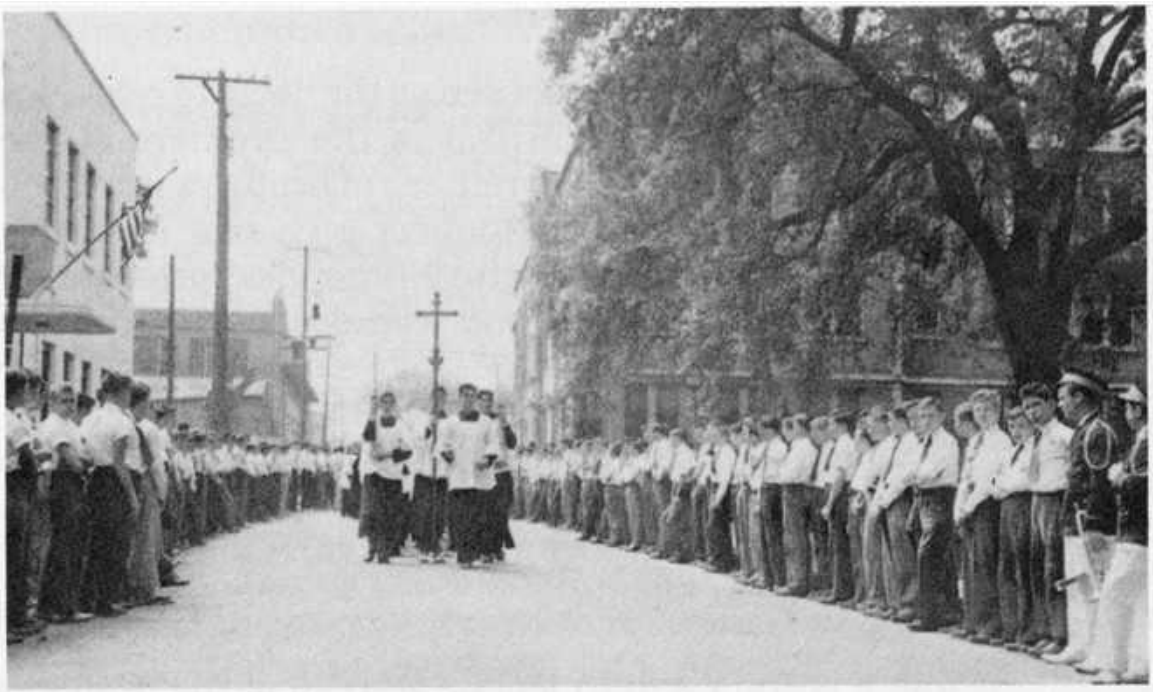
Nineteen forty-seven was a banner year for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the United States. Throughout the year, the brothers celebrated in various ways the centennial of the arrival of the first five brothers in America. For their 100th anniversary, the brothers, *"filled with an exalted enthusiasm, did all in their power to make the occasion a memorable one that would go down the years of the next century and give joy, courage, and pride to future generations of brothers."* (*Annuaire*: 41:82) Never before had the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the United States experienced such an affirmation of the labors they had carried out in a quiet and humble manner. Newspapers and national magazines, as well as radio broadcasts, sang the praises of the brothers' outstanding work in Catholic education over the previous 100 years.

April 23-24, 1947, were chosen as the dates to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in America. Six committees of brothers prepared the festivities under the coordination of a central executive committee headed by Brother Martin Hernandez, principal of St. Aloysius in New Orleans, and composed of Brothers Ignatius Anderson, principal of St. Aloysius in Vicksburg; Brother Claver Thomas, principal of Thibodaux College; Brother Benedict Gaudin, principal of Catholic High in Donaldsonville; Brother Gerald Coridan, principal of McGill Institute in Mobile; and Brother Basil Harrington, director of Catholic Boys' Home in Mobile.

It was a grand event in Mobile with all of the brothers stationed in the South taking part. Hundreds of friends, guests, and dignitaries descended upon Mobile, tying up all the railways, highways, and skyways: *"Downtown Mobile took on the appearances of a convention city. Parking lots were overcrowded, the hotel lobbies were swarming with civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries, and McGill Institute, directly across the street from the newest and largest hotel in Mobile, was an open house, with everybody coming and going."* (*Annuaire* 41:98)

Among the many dignitaries attending the celebration were Brother Albertinus Juge, superior general of the Institute; Bishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile; Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel of New Orleans; Bishop Richard

Gerow of Natchez; Bishop Charles Greco of Alexandria; Abbot Boniface Seng, OSB, of Cullman, Alabama; the Rev. Thomas Shields, SJ, president of Loyola University in New Orleans; the Rev. Patrick Donnelly, SJ, president of Spring Hill College in Mobile; the Rev. Leo Byrnes, Superintendent of Education in Mobile; Brother Germain Cardin, provincial of Arthabaska, Canada; Brother Gaétan Helms, provincial of St. Hyacinthe, Canada; Brother Émile Bonin, provincial of Quebec, Canada; and Brother Jean-Marie Bouchard, provincial of New England.



Students from McGill Institute lining the streets of downtown Mobile to form an honor guard as Church dignitaries and Brothers of the Sacred Heart process to the cathedral to celebrate a solemn pontifical Mass on April 23, 1947

The centenary unleashed a flood of events unprecedented in the province's history. Celebrations included processions, a solemn pontifical Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception with 41 brothers singing in the choir, several concerts given by the St. Aloysius of New Orleans high school band, special radio broadcasts prepared by the brothers, a grand banquet for more than 500 persons at the Admiral Semmes Hotel, a civic reception at Bishop Toolen High School Auditorium in Mobile, many speeches, and a 36-page souvenir program which included a copy of a congratulatory letter to Brother Gilbert Reuter, provincial, signed by President Harry S. Truman.

A quieter but more lasting memorial marking the anniversary was the publication of *A Century of Service for the Sacred Heart in the United States*. Brother Macarius Pierce, former provincial, renowned for his writings, such as

his reflections *From the Morris Chair* while director at McGill, undertook the monumental task of researching and writing the history of the brothers in the United States since their arrival in Mobile, Alabama, on January 11, 1847.

In a letter to the brothers, Brother Macarius described his book as *"a panegyric of the simple deeds of our brothers, by one who has spent a long and happy life under the aegis of the Institute, and who is grateful to the Sacred Heart for the innumerable favors and blessings he has enjoyed. He has known most of the brothers of the past century and their devotion to duty has been his admiration, his inspiration, and his edification throughout his life. It has therefore been an honor and a pleasure for him to depict their deeds."* (December 10, 1946) Back in 1946, he sold copies of his marvelous 392-page book to friends and alumni for only $3.50 to help defray its cost.

CHAPTER 2

A CENTURY OF SERVICE

In *A Century of Service*, Brother Macarius relates the founding of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart on September 30, 1821, in Lyons, France, by the Rev. André Coindre. An ardent diocesan missionary, Père Coindre inspired others by his eloquent preaching and compassionate disposition. The first 10 Brothers of the Sacred Heart made their vows in Our Lady's Chapel at Fourvière in Lyons. The congregation, dedicated to the evangelization of youth through Christian education, was just beginning to spread when its founder died in 1826 at the age of only 39.

André's brother, the Rev. Vincent Coindre, took direction of the young congregation. Although he meant well, he lacked the necessary administrative ability to guide a congregation, and things went badly. Father Vincent finally resigned after 15 years, leaving the congregation diminished in numbers and almost financially bankrupt. Providentially, in 1841 Brother Polycarp Gondre was elected as superior general. He proved himself not only a holy man (his cause for canonization is in process at the Vatican) but also a capable administrator. Under Brother Polycarp the brothers regained confidence, and the congregation flourished.

Brother Macarius's history tells how five Brothers of the Sacred Heart answered a call launched by Brother Polycarp to become the congregation's first missionaries. Responding to an invitation from Bishop Michael Portier, first bishop of Mobile, five brothers embarked from France on the *Anna*. After three months of stormy sailing, they finally reached Mobile on January 11, 1847. There they set about learning a new language and new customs. Under the direction of Brother Alphonse Bernard, the brothers immediately took charge of the 18 orphans housed at Catholic Male Orphan Asylum on the corner of St. Francis and Warren streets. The brothers overcame tremendous difficulties involving not just the language and customs of a foreign country, but epidemics of yellow fever, hurricanes that battered the Gulf Coast, fires that ravaged their buildings several times, and even a civil war.

Expansion in America

In the April 19, 1947, edition of *America*, Father Allan Farrell, SJ, editor, commemorated the brothers' anniversary and pointed out how the Brothers of

the Sacred Heart and the Jesuits had been closely associated in the common apostolate of education ever since those first five brothers sailed on the same ship that carried Father Francis de Sales Gautrelet, SJ, and five Jesuit confreres to Mobile to take charge of Spring Hill College. A primary reason that Brother Polycarp sent brothers to Mobile was the bishop's assurance that they could open Catholic schools in the diocese. On September 1, 1847, the brothers moved with the orphans to the corner of Massachusetts and St. Lawrence streets near St. Vincent's Church. In three months St. Vincent's Orphanage, as it was then called, cared for 35 orphans. In October 1847, the brothers opened their first school in the sacristy of the church. In 1848 with the help of two novices, they opened a free school for the poor on the corner of Conti and Claiborne streets. And in 1849 they also staffed the new Cathedral School.

From these humble beginnings in Mobile, the brothers gradually spread out in several directions. Another French bishop, the Most Rev. Mathias Loras, invited them to Dubuque, Iowa, in 1850. And the Rev. Stanislaus Buteux, a French pastor, called them to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, in 1854. The French brothers had difficulty recruiting members among a predominantly English-speaking population, but many more missionaries came to America to help the newly established colony. In fact a total of 163 missionary brothers came from France to the American Province to work in the United States and Canada between 1847 and 1900. With recruits from the United States and, especially, French-speaking Canada, the brothers' work spread extensively.

By 1900 the American Province was large enough to be divided between the United States and Canada. In the 53 years since their arrival, the brothers had opened 28 schools in the United States, 18 of which were still open at the turn of the century. After the creation of the Canadian Province, four schools in French-speaking New England went under Canadian jurisdiction, leaving the brothers in the United States Province with 14 schools. Of the 109 brothers remaining in the United States Province after the division, all but 17 had made final vows; many were old and sick. There were no houses of formation and no recruits. Discouraged but not daunted, the brothers renewed their efforts. By 1947, their centennial year, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the United States Province numbered 228 members and administered 19 establishments, as listed below. One of them was a house of formation, two were orphanages, and three were mission schools in Africa.

United States Province in 1947

School	Place	Opened
Catholic Boys' Home Orphanage	Mobile, AL	1847
St. Stanislaus College	Bay St. Louis, MS	1854
D'Evereux Hall Orphanage	Natchez, MS	1865
St. Aloysius College	New Orleans, LA	1869
St. Aloysius College	Vicksburg, MS	1879
Catholic High School	Donaldsonville, LA	1886
Thibodaux College	Thibodaux, LA	1891
Catholic High School	Baton Rouge, LA	1894
Menard Memorial High School	Alexandria, LA	1894
St. Joseph's House of Studies	Metuchen, NJ	1901
St. Joseph's College	Muskogee, OK	1909
St. Rose of Lima Elementary	Brooklyn, NY	1919
McGill Institute	Mobile, AL	1928
St. Willibrord's School	Verdun, Canada	1933
St. Aloysius College	Nyapea, Uganda	1940
Coindre Hall Boarding School	Huntington, NY	1940
St. Luke's Elementary	Bronx, NY	1943
St. Joseph's Junior School	Gulu, Uganda	1946
Sacred Heart Intermediate	Okaru, Sudan	1947

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

In the late '40s, caught up in the glory of the centennial celebrations and the promise of a prosperous future, the brothers and their friends did not suspect what portentous events would unfold within the next two decades: the Second Vatican Council and its reforming message, a revolution in religious life and practices, and a further division of the province. Part Two of *Plus Fifty* takes up the story of the United States Province from 1947 until its division in 1960 into the New Orleans and New York provinces. Then it continues with the history of the New Orleans Province from 1960 to the present. The two sections of Part Two correspond roughly to the years before and after Vatican II which signaled the end of one period and the beginning of another.

Ironically the period that was to end for the Brothers of the Sacred Heart had already been referred to by the brothers in the late 1950's as *"the Golden Age of our Institute in the United States."* (*Annuaire* 50:152) Under the dynamic leadership of Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, the period from 1949 to 1958 had been one of phenomenal physical growth of the province: the number of professed personnel rose to 287, an increase of 42 members; houses of formation in the North and South were overflowing; school properties were improved and new large high schools were constructed in New Orleans and Brooklyn; and the African missions flourished. Of course, all of the brothers had been trained in the traditional religious life with its definite emphasis on discipline and regularity. That traditional discipline had just led them to the stability and the successes of the '50s. Consequently those two factors made it much harder for the brothers to accept and adapt to the transition period of the '60s and '70s with its many changes and new regulations. But to their credit, most did so generously and even gracefully.

Certainly no other event in the history of the brothers has had such a profound effect on religious life and ministry as that of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council announced by Pope John XXIII in 1959 and opened by him in 1962. In his opening address, the 80-year-old pope *"gently chided the prophets of doom within the Church and spoke of the world's need for the medicine of mercy. Thus less than nine months before his death, he set the pastoral tone which was to dominate the Council deliberations."* (*Documents of Vatican II*, xv) By the time that John XXIII's successor, Pope Paul VI, concluded the council in 1965, its members had produced an amazing 16 documents that were just the

beginning of Pope John's *aggiornamento*. For the next 30 years and beyond, the Church grappled with the contents of documents dealing with the nature of the Church itself, its liturgy, revelation, communications, ecumenism, priestly formation, religious life, the laity, missions, and education.

The decade after Vatican II was one of turmoil and confusion within the Church as many long-established traditions began to fall away. For many people laity, clerics, and religious alike the changes called for by Vatican II were difficult to accept and challenging to implement. For the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, as for all other religious congregations, *Perfectae Caritatis*, the council decree on the appropriate renewal of religious life, would have tremendous impact of their lifestyle, mission, and ministry.

For the brothers in the New Orleans Province, this period of change in the Church and society affected all aspects of their life: daily schedule, dress, prayers in common, and most especially, the Rule of Life itself. More concretely, cassocks, rosaries, devotions such as the Way of the Cross, novenas to the Sacred Heart, Friday fasts, and other religious practices were set aside. At the same time, there was a much greater freedom in regard to ordering one's daily life, visiting family and friends, taking part in social, civic, and professional organizations, driving automobiles, and so on. This new freedom in religious life also demanded a new sense of responsibility, a new acceptance of individual differences, and a new way of understanding obedience. As never before, religious authority was questioned, challenged, and held accountable to right reason, the common good, and the good of the individual. The foundations of religious life seemed shaken by a sinister wind. The windows had indeed been thrown open by Pope John, but no one seemed to know what the winds would blow away.

During this transition period of the '60s and '70s, 96 professed brothers of the New Orleans Province left the Institute, and novice classes decreased from an average of about 15 a year to three. The loss of so many vocations, as well as the drastic drop in numbers entering religious life, had a demoralizing impact on brothers in the province. Not fully understanding what was happening, some brothers claimed that closing the juniorate was the cause of fewer vocations. Others said the decrease was due to the brothers' withdrawal from schools where they had worked for many years. Still others blamed the loss on the changes in religious life and charged that some congregations were no longer worthy of new vocations. Religious leaders throughout the country were searching for ways to explain this new situation. A Pontifical Commission headed by Archbishop John Quinn hired Catholic University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate to study reasons for declining vocations.

The Quinn Report published in 1986 pointed out that *"the great vocation boom between 1945 and 1960 was an abnormal period."* (p. 14) It clarified that the decline in vocations was due more to systemic sociological factors than to particular practices or policies or to a lack of religious spirit.

Religious life throughout the world, not just in the New Orleans Province, was in transition; but the future was not clear. There was conflict and turmoil in religious life, just as there was in American society in the mid-'60s and '70s. Ironically, throughout the turmoil of the changes in religious life, the schools conducted by the brothers succeeded as never before. A long-range program of emphasis on professional studies was paying off, and brothers were in the forefront of the educational revolution of the '60s. Their schools prospered. Gradually during the late '70s and '80s, the brothers came to realize that their mission to evangelize through education was meant to be shared with the laity and that as brothers they were called upon to help lead in the formation of new generations of teachers to carry on the ministry of education.

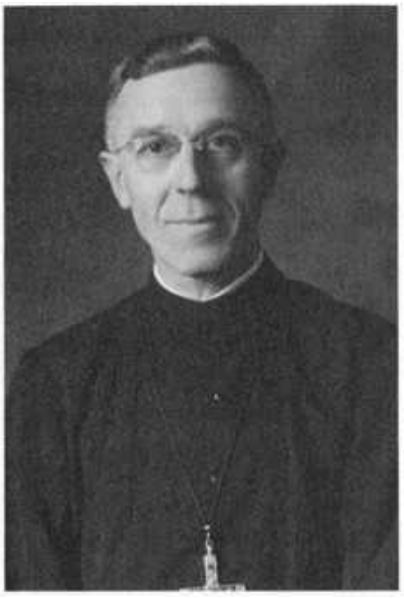
Part Two of this history tells the story of the life of the United States Province and later of the New Orleans Province during the past 50 years. It highlights the major struggles and decisions of the provincial superiors and their four councillors, of the provincial chapters held every three years, and of the Institute's general chapters convened every six years. During the past 50 years, the province has been blessed with outstanding leadership which the nine provincials whose terms are described in the following pages have generously shared on the national level and on the international level of the Institute.

This expanded role of leadership in religious life began on a national level in 1957 when Brother Martin Hernandez was elected to the executive committee of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). Most of the provincials of the New Orleans Province after him have also been very active on the national level, serving on various committees of the CMSM, including the executive committee, and holding such national offices as treasurer, secretary, and vice-president. On the international level, participation in the general administration of the Institute by brothers of the province has been continuous since 1931 when Brother Albertinus Juge joined the general council. After Brother Albertinus finished an extended 15-year stretch as superior general in 1952, three brothers from the province have served on the general council until 1994: Brothers Alexis Klee (1952-70), Marcel Riviere (1970-88), and Xavier Werneth (1988-94). This leadership on the international level by a brother from the New Orleans Province continues to this day in the person of Brother Bernard Couvillion, who was elected to a six-year term in 1994 to lead the Institute as superior general.

CHAPTER 3

BROTHER GILBERT

(1946-1949)



Most brothers were really surprised when Brother Martinian Pauc, outgoing provincial superior, announced on November 27, 1946, that Brother Albertinus Juge, superior general, and the general council had just named Brother Gilbert Reuter provincial superior of the United States Province. After all, Brothers Martin Hernandez and Alexis Klee had been elected by the provincial chapter the previous July in New Orleans to represent the province at the general chapter at Paradis, France, in October. Usually one of the elected delegates was named provincial.

Some brothers say that Brother Gilbert was a compromise candidate between Brother Martin and Brother Peter Basso, two very talented men, each with a strong personality but with very different views on many topics. Both men had attended general chapters in Europe, and both had served on the previous provincial council of Brother Martinian. Brother Gilbert, on the other hand, had never attended a general chapter and had not even served as a provincial councilor. In fact, he had had very little administrative experience, having served only briefly as principal in Meridian, Mississippi, and Vincennes, Indiana. But he had been novice master at Metuchen for 17 years, and more than half the brothers in the province had been his novices. He had much experience in religious formation, but in those days provincials were usually named for their administrative abilities. So the brothers did not anticipate Brother Gilbert's appointment.

The brothers knew that Brother Martinian, who was completing his third three-year term, would be the last Frenchman to serve as provincial since there were no more French brothers as likely candidates. So there had been lively speculation about Brother Martinian's possible successor. Most were anticipating that Brother Martin, whom they had elected as a delegate to the general chapter, would be named provincial because he had already proved himself as a capable administrator and a dedicated religious. Brother Gilbert's appointment, however, was well received by the brothers, all of whom respected

him as a devout, solid religious based on his no-nonsense, down-to-earth approach with his novice classes.

In announcing Brother Gilbert's appointment, Brother Martinian wrote the brothers: *"All of you know his sterling worth, his loyalty to the community, his spirit of prayer and of sacrifice. Let us back him up to the full extent of our ability by our obedience to his injunctions, by our loyalty to his person, by our prayers in his behalf, and, above all, by the strict observance of our Rules and Constitutions."* (Circular, Nov. 27, 1946) The chronicler of the *Annuaire* for 1947 pointed out that Brother Gilbert's *"knowledge of the difficulties and problems of the young brothers has fitted him for the task. Although for such a long time he was out of touch with the central activities of the Southern Brothers, he has slowly and methodically acquainted himself with conditions and is now taking up each problem with great good will and courage."* (41:84)

When Brother Gilbert took over as provincial in late 1946, the administration of the United States Province was no small task. The province consisted of 224 professed brothers, 18 scholastics, 10 novices, and 68 candidates. The brothers conducted 19 establishments, comprising primary and secondary schools, orphanages, and houses of formation. The brothers' schools were scattered from North to South in New York, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. There was also one school in Verdun, Canada, and three African mission schools in Gulu and Nyapea, Uganda, as well as one in the process of being opened in Okaru in the Sudan. To help Brother Gilbert govern the province, the general council named four provincial councillors: Brothers Martin Hernandez, principal of St. Aloysius in New Orleans; Peter Basso, principal of St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis; Alexis Klee, scholastic master at Metuchen; and Casimir Piskorowski, principal of Catholic High School in Baton Rouge.

Emphasis on Higher Studies

The shift in the administration of the province from the French missionaries to American-born brothers coincided well with a major change in the role of brothers' schools. Following World War II, the role of Catholic education in the United States shifted from one of ministering to mainly immigrant Catholic families to a new role of ministering to families entering into the mainstream of American civil and political life. Demands for Catholic education increased, and at the same time a movement arose within Catholic school systems to meet higher standards of professional certification.

Perhaps Brother Gilbert's major accomplishment as provincial, one for which his years in formation had prepared him so well, was the advancement of higher education among the brothers. This had long been a goal of the province, but one just over the horizon. Brother Gilbert was the first provincial to permit a large number of young brothers to attend summer schools for higher studies at Catholic University and Fordham instead of working at summer camps in Bay St. Louis and Huntington. He wanted to assure that the outstanding reputation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in education built up over the past century would not only endure but improve. Besides providing brothers opportunities for higher studies, Brother Gilbert encouraged them to participate in Catholic educational organizations which were becoming an increasingly powerful force on the national scene.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart were indeed on the cutting edge of Catholic education in the late '40s. In 1947 Brother Peter Basso addressed a convention of Catholic school teachers in the Archdiocese of Boston on concrete, practical principles in the formation of Christian character. His address was so well received, it appeared later that year in *The Catholic School Journal*. He was often a guest speaker at assemblies in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Bay St. Louis, Mobile, Dallas, and Boston. He was nationally recognized as an expert on the education of youth and was invited to give a series of radio talks on character formation of youth. Also in 1947 Brothers Gerald Coridan and Berchmans Downey attended the regional meeting of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) in Louisville, Kentucky, where Brother Berchmans delivered a paper on the value of summer schools.

For the years 1947-49, Brothers Gerald Coridan and Alexis Klee, secretary of the Secondary School Department of the NCEA, served on the executive committee of the NCEA. In 1948 Brother Alexis attended the NCEA national convention in San Francisco where he heard the Rev. Gerald Walsh, SJ, of Fordham University, stress in his keynote speech that *"Catholic educators must help to provide the world with scholars, citizens, and saints, or better still citizens who are both scholars and saints. . . . In the measure of our power, we must help to form public opinion in our neighborhood, on the national stage, and even in international society."* (*Province Monthly*, May, 1948, p. 1) Brother Alexis, who at that time was writing his dissertation for a doctoral degree in education from Rutgers University, believed strongly that more brothers should pursue higher studies. And he was in a position of importance in the province: Besides being on the provincial council, he was scholastic master and director of studies at Metuchen. Thus, he had a strong influence on the young brothers and their education. Of course, the young brothers did not need much convincing;

they fully agreed with the previous provincial chapter resolution urging the provincial administration to put much more emphasis on higher studies.

In 1948 Brother Claver Thomas completed his work at Fordham University for his doctorate in education, becoming the first Brother of the Sacred Heart in the United States to do so. During the summer of that same year, an impressive 112 brothers attended summer school at various colleges and universities: Loyola of New Orleans, Fordham, Spring Hill, Catholic University in Washington, and Louisiana State. Sending so many brothers to school was costly; and money, of course, was a problem. To cut down on travel expenses, the province requisitioned a newly purchased bus from St. Stanislaus to transport the brothers from the South to Fordham and Catholic universities in the North. These bus trips to and from summer college courses became a tradition, and many brothers still recall with great relish the long and eventful bus trips they took together for summer school.

Spiritual and Religious Formation

In addition to his efforts to improve the professional formation of the brothers, Brother Gilbert with his council bought and developed two beautiful pieces of property in the vicinity of Mobile to create proper accommodations for initial religious formation. Brother Gilbert knew firsthand from his 17 years as novice master that the buildings at Metuchen which were serving as a postulate, novitiate, and scholasticate were terribly overcrowded and in dire need of repairs. For the 194748 session, there were 70 postulants at Metuchen. In a letter to the brothers dated December 1, 1947, Brother Gilbert described the two properties and stated their intended purposes: one at Daphne for a juniorate and one near Spring Hill College for a scholasticate.

The provincial council charged Brother Martin Hernandez to work with architects and contractors to draw up plans for a scholasticate to be erected during the 1949-50 school year. In the meanwhile, the house at Daphne served as a scholasticate for two years before being opened as a juniorate in 1950. Brother Martinian's final words to the brothers before leaving office had been *"RECRUITS and more RECRUITS."* To this end and to assure the houses of formation remained full, Brother Gilbert's council asked Brother George Woodburn, retired vocation director, to resume recruiting in the North and named Brother Ignatius Anderson to recruit in the South.

During his administration, Brother Gilbert placed emphasis not only on the formation of the brothers, but also on the spiritual development of students confided to their care. On several occasions during the school year, brothers in charge of sodality and confraternity work participated in weekend conferences to discuss each school's programs and to draw up unified plans of action. Brother Gilbert also emphasized the importance of vocation work and recruiting, as well as the cause for the beatification of Brother Polycarp which was still in its initial stages at the time.

In those days, the provincial superior was expected to hold a personal interview with every brother and conduct a group conference during the annual weeklong retreats. These retreats were always conducted in strict silence and were usually preached by a Jesuit priest following the exercises of St. Ignatius. In 1949, to accommodate all the brothers in the North and South and their various needs, Brother Gilbert arranged to have five different retreats in the province: one at the scholasticate in Daphne, a special "small retreat" at Bay St. Louis for 50 student brothers going to summer school, a large retreat at the Bay for the majority of the brothers in the South, one at Huntington for the student brothers in the North, and another at Metuchen for the majority of the brothers working in the North.

Regularity and Religious Discipline

Brother Gilbert was not a prolific writer as provincial. Most of his circular letters were to announce the death of a brother or to remind the brother directors of decisions of the provincial or general chapters. During the '40s and '50s, regularity and religious discipline were seen as the most important aspects of religious life. In most of his circulars, Brother Gilbert kindly urged adherence to general chapter decisions or directives. In a letter to the brothers on December 1, 1947, he reminds them of regulations he promulgated the previous February. The following excerpts illustrate well his constant theme of putting *"First Things First"* and give a flavor of the religious discipline typical of the period:

"May I take this occasion to remind you of the wish of the Provincial Council that all coaching and athletics be done by the coaches who are hired and paid for this purpose: ` Tasks which take the Brothers away from community life must be avoided.' (Article 3, General Chapter)

"No Brother should be put in charge of athletics, coaching or other extra curricular activities to the detriment of his spiritual exercises. First things first, always. (Circular, February 2, 1947)

"The General Chapter absolutely forbids the presence of the Brothers at public events of sports, except those in which their own school participates. (Article 22, General Chapter)

"Attending too many games would be an abuse. Traveling to cities more distant than 100 miles for school, college, Sugar Bowl, or other events would be an abuse. (Circular, February 2, 1947)"

Attention Given to Africa

During October and November of 1948, Brother Gilbert left the province in Brother Martin Hernandez's hands while he visited the 14 missionary brothers working in Uganda, Sudan, and Kenya. He had sent six new missionaries to Africa in 1947, the year that the house in the Sudan opened. And before he left in 1948, the house in Kenya opened. It was important that he see firsthand what was happening in the missions, especially the new foundations. He was the first provincial to visit Africa, even though the brothers had been there since 1931. World War II had hampered all travel abroad between 1939 and 1946. Of course, the brothers in Africa spared no measure to assure that the visit was a success. African hospitality, combined with the hospitality of the brothers, guaranteed that every measure would be taken within the brothers' limited resources to assure that Brother Gilbert's visit was a pleasant and profitable one.

In Gulu after a special meal in his honor, Brother Gilbert, a man of dry wit who was sometimes misunderstood because of his serious demeanor, commented that the brothers in Africa surely ate well. Some brothers, afraid that maybe he was serious and fearing that he would leave with the wrong impression, sent a message ahead of him telling the brothers there to serve the provincial only the regular fare.

Besides visiting two communities in Uganda, Gulu and Nyapea, Brother Gilbert visited the two houses founded during his mandate, one in Okaru, southern Sudan, and one in Nyeri, Kenya. While in Africa, Brother Gilbert also met with several bishops and apostolic delegates to assure that the work of the brothers fit in with general diocesan plans. On his way back to the United States, he stopped in Rome to visit the brothers at Cristo Re and to attend a general audience with Pope Pius XII. He also stopped in LePuy, France, for a visit with Brother Albertinus, superior general.

The Bronx and Verdun

In 1948 Brother Gilbert responded favorably to an invitation to take over St. Joseph's Elementary School in the Bronx and sent four brothers there. He had proposed to Brother Gaétan Helms, provincial of the St. Hyacinthe Province, that the Canadian brothers take charge of St. Willibrord's Secondary School in Verdun, Quebec Province, Canada, at the close of the 1948 school year. This would free American brothers for the new establishments in the Bronx and in Africa. The timing was bad, however, since the province of St. Hyacinthe was in the process of being divided into two new provinces: Granby and Montreal. Amid such change, the Canadian brothers were unable to take over the school, and Brother Gilbert was forced to withdraw the two brothers from the elementary division of St. Willibrord's. To make for a smoother transition, he agreed to allow the brothers to remain in the high school division until the end of the 1949 session.

It was difficult to withdraw from Verdun since the province always enjoyed excellent relations with the Catholic School Commission there. Ten brothers from the United States, under the leadership of Brother Macarius Pierce, had gone to St. Willibrord's in 1933 to teach English. They took over the school from the brothers in Canada because the Irish and English parishioners had strong antipathies toward the French Canadians. Actually the Canadian brothers there had done excellent work and spoke English far better than most of the parishioners. The American brothers were always well-liked in Verdun, and upon leaving in 1949 they hoped someday to return. The idea remained active, and on February 16, 1960, the provincial council voted to accept the Verdun School Commission's invitation to return to St. Willibrord's for the 1960-61 school session, pending approval of the general council. Plans did not materialize, however. Once again timing was bad. That very year the United States Province was divided into the New York and New Orleans provinces.

Brother Macarius Pierce's Dreams

During Brother Gilbert's term two educational giants in the province died: Brothers Macarius Pierce and Peter Basso. On February 20, 1948, Brother Macarius died at Hotel Dieu in New Orleans at the age of 76. He was an outstanding Catholic educator and a role model for the brothers. His educational philosophy can be summed up with words from a lecture he gave at the NCEA national convention in 1913. According to *Mac*, as he was affectionately called,

a Catholic teacher should be *"a saint, a scholar, and a master."* Certainly Brother Macarius was all three. He is well remembered in the province for his writings, especially for his classic history, *A Century of Service*. He was the first American provincial in the United States, serving one term from 1919 to 1922. As provincial, he suffered greatly, feeling that his ideas were never fully understood by the general administration.

Brother Macarius had three great dreams for the province: to see a worthwhile building at Metuchen, to have the brothers pursue higher studies, and to recruit a sizeable number of candidates from the schools in the South. For the most part, he was frustrated in his plans. The general administration rejected his building plans for Metuchen as being too lavish. He was able to initiate higher studies to a limited extent and sent brothers to Loyola and Spring Hill. Surely he must have been pleased to see Brother Gilbert's efforts come to such great fruition a quarter of a century later. It was also Brother Macarius who appointed Brother Felix Hoffman as vocation director to recruit candidates from various schools, a job he carried out with much energy and enthusiasm for 22 years.

Brother Peter's Vision

Brother Peter Basso, one of Brother Gilbert's provincial councillors and president of St. Stanislaus College, entered Touro Infirmary in New Orleans in early June 1948, just after he presided over the graduation ceremonies at the Bay. He never recovered from his abdominal operation, and he died of cancer just four months later on September 26, 1948, at the age of 59. The province lost one of its outstanding leaders who had served on the provincial council for 17 years, directed St. Stanislaus for 14 years, and Catholic High in Baton Rouge for eight years. He was outstanding in Christian education. He may also be considered the prototype for today's school presidents and for those brothers presently involved in development programs. He was a polished public speaker and was thoroughly involved in public and civic affairs. He understood the importance of good public relations with the civil authorities, and while in Baton Rouge he became a close personal friend of Governors Huey P. Long and Richard Leche.

Many years after Brother Peter's death, his one-time rival, Brother Martin, wrote in his *Musings of an Old Man #2* that *"Brother Peter was a man and a religious 50 years ahead of his time. He was Vatican II long before Vatican II was conceived."* Brother Martin, who visited Brother Peter regularly

during his last months in the hospital, came to understand and appreciate him as an extraordinarily talented man who used his God-given talents doing good in his own way and becoming famous in a field that he called *boyology*. More than 3,000 persons followed his coffin to its grave in Bay St. Louis. Brother Gerard Gilbert, principal of St. Aloysius in Vicksburg, was named to replace him on the provincial council; and Brother Alexis Klee became president at St. Stanislaus College.

Request to be Relieved

When Brother Gilbert's term of three years was ending in 1949, he wrote to Brother Albertinus, superior general, pleading not to be renamed provincial. He was tired, even exhausted. For him the administrative tasks were a real burden. In fact, he had delegated most of them to Brother Martin, whom he found energetic and capable. But Brother Gilbert was not really happy in administration, and he complained to Brother Albertinus that three of his council members and most of his local directors left too much to be desired and caused him too many headaches. No matter how hard he tried to overcome his natural tendencies, he was losing his cheerful personality and actually becoming physically sick because of his strong distaste for the job. Realizing this, he asked to be replaced as provincial and was very happy when the general council relieved him of the burden and named him to return to Metuchen as novice master, replacing Brother Nicholas Geisenberg. It is as a novice master and as an ideal religious that most brothers remember Brother Gilbert with profound respect and reverence.

Brother Gilbert chose November 11, 1949, the feast of St. Martin, to inform the brothers of the general council's letter of November 4 naming Brother Martin Hernandez provincial. In his last circular announcing Brother Martin's appointment, Brother Gilbert wrote: *"All of you know his sterling worth and his loyalty and devotedness to the interests of our Community. Let us back him up to the full extent of our ability by our obedience to his commands, by our loyalty to his person, by our prayers in his behalf, and, above all, by the strict observance of our Holy Rules."* Brother Gilbert had not lost his dry wit and sense of humor, for he had copied almost word for word Brother Martinian's last circular three years earlier announcing his own appointment.

CHAPTER 4

BROTHER MARTIN

(1949-1958)

When Brother Martin Hernandez took over as provincial in November of 1949, he was already an experienced administrator. For the previous 15 years as principal of St. Aloysius, he had worked well with the school's director-presidents, Brothers Martinian Pauc and Lambert Fairfield, and he had made a name for himself in New Orleans as an energetic, dynamic, and capable administrator able to give his attention to many and varied details. Brother Martin was popular with the brothers, who welcomed his appointment as provincial with enthusiasm, confident that he would perform his new duties with his usual vision, energy, and exactness.

Very few brothers were surprised when Brother Martin Hernandez was named provincial. In fact, his appointment was widely expected because Brother Gilbert Reuter obviously did not want a second term as provincial and had delegated most of the administrative chores of the province to Brother Martin during the previous two years. After his nomination, Brother Martin did not even have to change residences because at that time St. Aloysius College's administration building on the corner of Esplanade and St. Claude in New Orleans also housed the provincial's private office, a large council meeting room, and five private rooms for brothers.

A Golden Era

For many brothers, Brother Martin's appointment presaged a new day of progress. They were not disappointed; at the end of his term nine years later, many brothers looked back on it as a "Golden Era" in the province, as a period of phenomenal growth. The scholasticate building was completed. Significant capital improvements were made at existing schools throughout the province. And construction of three new community-owned high schools, one in New

Orleans, one in New York, and a new Catholic High in Baton Rouge, crowned Brother Martin's building achievements.

At the beginning of Brother Martin's administration, the United States Province numbered 245 professed members, 15 novices, and 60 postulants. The brothers staffed 16 schools and two houses of formation as tabulated below:

Locality	Institution	Brothers	Students	Boarders	
Alexandria, LA	Menard Memorial High School	9	234	16	
Baton Rouge, LA	Catholic High School	22	644		
Bay St. Louis, MS	St. Stanislaus College	27	436	221	
Bronx, NY	St. Joseph's Elementary School	5	236		
	St. Luke's Elementary School	6	284		
	St. Philip Neri Elementary School	4	120		
Brooklyn, NY	St. Rose of Lima Elementary	8	388		
Daphne, AL	Sacred Heart Scholasticate	21			
Donaldsonville, LA	Catholic High School	6	191	10	
Huntington, NY	Coindre Hall Boarding School	17	122	122	
Metuchen, NJ	St. Joseph's House of Studies	18	75	75	
Mobile, AL	Catholic Boys' Home Orphanage	9	70	70	
	McGill Institute	15	390		
Muskogee, OK	St. Joseph's College	11	178	78	
Natchez, MS	D'Evereux Hall Orphanage	6	34	34	
New Orleans, LA	St. Aloysius College	31	920		
Thibodaux, LA	Thibodaux College	7	243	15	
Vicksburg, MS	St. Aloysius College	9	270		
		231	**4,834**		**641**

In addition to the 231 brothers working in the States, 14 brothers from the province staffed four mission schools in Africa. Named to the provincial council to assist Brother Martin in leading this large province were Brother Gilbert Reuter, former provincial and novice master; Brother Alexis Klee, president of St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis and president of the Secondary School Department of the National Catholic Educational Association; Brother Claver Thomas, teacher at the scholasticate in Daphne; and Brother André Robichaud, who replaced Brother Martin at St. Aloysius.

One of the major concerns of the provincial council was that of recruiting and formation. Brother André, who had been the recruiter in the

South, continued in that function; but since he was named to direct St. Aloysius in New Orleans, seven brothers in various schools were appointed to work with him in coordinating brothers' efforts to promote vocations. Brother George Woodburn, recruiter in the North for more than 20 years, continued his work in that part of the province. The fervent efforts of the brothers paid off. With the opening of the juniorate in Daphne, the province counted a record number of 133 young people for the year 1950-51 in its three houses of formation. The province had 96 postulants, 16 of them at the new juniorate in Daphne and 80 at Metuchen, along with 11 novices there. And there were 26 scholastics at Spring Hill.

Brother Martin, especially during his first term in office, not only wrote about encouraging vocations, he got personally involved in the recruiting efforts. Brother Matthias Amos, currently a provincial councilor, recalls that when he was a junior at McGill Institute in Mobile, Brother Martin, who had just been appointed provincial, visited and spoke to his class to encourage vocations. The following fall, when the future Brother Matthias joined three other boys in New Orleans to board a train for Metuchen, Brother Martin himself boarded the train to see them off. He blessed them and told them that if they got discouraged at Metuchen to stay until Thanksgiving at which time he would come and talk to them personally to see how they were doing. *"He was so full of energy,"* recalls Brother Matthias, *"I could feel it. He made his influence felt."*

Religious Discipline

In September 1950, Brother Martin brought together the directors of every school and local community of the province, both North and South, for an all-day conference with the provincial council. It was the first such meeting ever, and Brother Martin expressed his desire that it be an annual affair. Its purpose was *"to establish more uniformity in the conduct of the respective houses and to ensure greater cooperation among the faculties of the various establishments."* (*Province Monthly*, 4:1, p. 1) Some brothers considered this meeting as one of the first of Brother Martin's many efforts to instill more religious discipline and order in the province, a movement back to basics. They saw Brother Martin not just as a zealous religious who wanted to motivate the brothers to higher levels of dedication, but as a forceful authority figure who controlled almost every aspect of the daily life of the brothers.

Brother Martin set as a goal for himself to write an exhortatory circular to the brothers every month. He was very faithful to his goal, leaving behind him more than 150 circular letters. He ordered that the local superiors read these circulars to the brothers either during spiritual reading time or at the supper table. These circulars were one of his main tools in curtailing any weakening of religious discipline he encountered, and he regularly spoke out against mundane distractions that he saw creeping into the community, such as hi-fi's, recorders, and televisions all of which he would have liked *"to relegate to the junk heap"* because he thought that they brought a worldly spirit into religious houses. He ordered that the use of such items be limited to one hour during recreation and be used for classical music, not jazz, blues, or rock-'n-roll. (Circular #139, February 11, 1958) He was against television shows in general and variety shows in particular, especially that of Ed Sullivan, which featured Elvis Presley making his debut.

To Brother Martin, the Rule was everything. It was an expression of God's will regarding the duty of a religious and it was not to be softened in any way. During his first year in office, Brother Martin wrote to the brothers about what he called mitigations of the Rule. *"I am of the opinion,"* he wrote, *"that gradually during the course of the last century certain practices, substitutions, customs, traditions at least, these are the terms which we use have taken root among us. If we want to be honest with ourselves we would have to come to the conclusion that many of these `mitigations of the Rule' have no foundation for existence and therefore should be discarded. I intend to be more explicit on this at some later date and call your attention to some of these so-called customs or traditions."* (Provincial Circular, February 14, 1950)

Faithful to his promise, Brother Martin addressed the brothers concerning what he considered compromises with the Rule. He pushed hard to have silence at breakfast every day, not just during Lent, as was the custom in the province. He frequently reminded the brothers of the Rule concerning great silence to be observed after night prayers. And he urged brothers to truly fast on Fridays, to feel hunger. This was part of what he called the *"Pray and Pay"* plan for *"living the religious life to the hilt living it without compromise, cost what it may."* (Provincial Circular, June 31, 1951) He urged the brothers not just to pray fervently, but also to pay generously in a spirit of sacrifice: *"We will pay, and pay, and pay by many personal sacrifices and in this paying by sacrifice we will not count the cost."* (Provincial Circular, May 19, 1951)

Strong Leadership Style

Brother Martin's style was always direct, rarely delicate. He did not like *ifs* and *buts*. He believed in telling it like it was, plainly and sometimes bluntly. Some brothers were offended and even alienated by what they termed his hardness. Those who resisted his rigidity saw him as strict, harsh, and dictatorial. But even those who readily accepted his authority and leadership sometimes regretted his interference with local administrations and his authoritarian ways of dealing with directors and brothers.

According to several brothers, Brother Martin tested everyone's obedience. He was the *"boss"* of everyone and everything. And in his own demeanor he exhibited a firm and stern front that sometimes camouflaged the truly human and caring concern he possessed. He was gruff, but he would listen. And he was well respected because the brothers knew that he did not ask them to do anything that he himself would not do. They never questioned his sincerity, only his seeming inability to accept that not everyone was so strong as he.

Brother Martin's strong leadership style got things accomplished. He was a builder, a man of action. If something was to be done, it was to be done immediately. While his impulsiveness sometimes had negative effects that led him to reverse previous decisions, his judgments, in general, were sound and his instincts correct. And he enjoyed good relationships not just with the brothers, but with diocesan authorities and businessmen with whom he worked.

In spite of all of the construction undertaken during his nine years in office, Brother Martin maintained the financial stability of the province. In 1952 when he began his second term as provincial, the province debt of $250,000 was scheduled to be paid off within four years. Also, plans were well underway to build a new school in New Orleans and one in New York, necessitating mortgaging properties and borrowing money. Thanks to Brother Martin's sound business sense, the province was able to assume this additional debt of more than $1 million in order to handle these constructions.

Handling Financial Pressures

Brother Martin found himself in the unenviable position of having to refuse some brothers' requests for summer school. In theory he was very much in favor of the brothers continuing their education and obtaining higher

degrees; but staffing summer camps at Bay St. Louis and Huntington, as well as summer schools to take care of failures, required a large number of brothers. For example, in 1952 St. Stanislaus conducted its 25th session of summer camp, an undertaking in which 35 brothers participated. Brother Martin was hard pressed. After reviewing all of the applications of brothers to attend summer school at Fordham, Catholic University, Loyola, Notre Dame, LSU, and Spring Hill, he had to deny some.

He always urged brothers to accept their assignments, be they agreeable or not, in a spirit of obedience and to fulfill them in a true family spirit for the common good. He wrote the brothers: *"There is no doubt in my mind but that some of you will be keenly disappointed in not being assigned to a Summer School at some University. Instead, you will be told to assist at one of our Summer Camps, or to teach in one of our Summer Schools, or to assist in some improvement program in one of our own houses. All of you understand that these last mentioned are carried on for economic reasons maybe, not solely, but in reality primarily. These Brothers will be the breadwinners for the vacation period and their industry will go a long way in easing the heavy financial burdens of our self-education program."* (Provincial Circular, May 1, 1951)

Brother Martin felt the financial pressures early in his administration, and they were to become even more severe as building programs advanced. He put tremendous trust in prayer, and he sought the intercession of St. Joseph, especially in financial affairs. He frequently urged brothers to curtail waste, to economize wherever possible, to eliminate every superfluity, especially those involving what he called *"creature comforts."* Considering butter a luxury item, he urged houses to use oleo, and not even that at every meal. Coffee cream and canned cream were also considered too expensive. Drinking coffee after night prayers was definitely out of order. He asked brothers to write letters rather than buy greeting cards for birthdays and anniversaries. He admonished those local directors who allowed brothers to spend money to go to movies, something strictly forbidden at that time. And he frequently reminded brothers to ask their family and friends who could afford to do so to contribute to the Metuchen Building Fund.

Issues of Race

As early as 1950, issues of race arose in the province, and not just in the South. In August of 1950, the provincial council voted against Brother

Martin's proposal to accept Negroes into the postulancy programs at Daphne and Metuchen. The major reason given at the time was that it would be *"too difficult to place them in the various houses."* The province did in fact have at least one African-American applicant who was turned away. He later became a Marist brother, and 36 years later during a workshop for the brothers at which he was a speaker, he related how he was told by the recruiter that he could not enter Metuchen because it was overcrowded (there were in fact 22 novices and 75 postulants there) and that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart were not accepting any new candidates there that year in order to repair the buildings. In February of 1952, the council reversed its policy and declared that the province would recruit candidates regardless of race.

At the Southern regional meeting of the National Catholic Educational Association in December 1950 in Richmond, Virginia, the keynote speaker, Paul Williams, a Catholic lay leader, urged participants *"to condition their students to the abolition of racial segregation in the schools."* As a start, he suggested inviting Catholic Negroes to all Catholic educational meetings. (*Province Monthly*, January 1951) The NCEA national convention in Cleveland in March 1951 picked up the equality theme, enlarging it to "Human Rights and Education." Brother Alexis, who was elected president of the Secondary Schools Division by members at the convention, accepted responsibility for promulgating the non-discriminatory policies of the NCEA.

General Chapter of 1952

For the general chapter in October of 1952, the first at the new generalate in Rome, the province elected Brothers André Robichaud and Felician Fourrier as delegates to accompany Brother Martin, who went as provincial. According to Brother Felician, there was a movement at the chapter to elect Brother Martin to the general council. However, Brother Martin wanted nothing of it and convinced the other 42 capitulants that his services were much more needed in the province where he was in the process of building several schools. He submitted Brother Alexis Klee's name instead. Brother Martin spoke very highly of Brother Alexis, who was unknown to the delegates, assuring his election as third assistant general. Brother Josaphat Vanier, who had served three years as provincial of St. Hyacinthe in Canada and six years as first assistant general, was elected to succeed Brother Albertinus, who had served as superior general since 1937. Brother Albertinus went to Écully, France, to serve as novice master. And in 1956 at the request of Brother Martin, he retired to Metuchen where he spent

the last three years of his life teaching the novices two classes a day on grace and the history of the Institute.

Brother Josaphat and his general council named Brother Martin to a second term with a provincial council consisting of Brothers Gilbert Reuter and Claver Thomas and two newcomers, Brothers Felician Fourrier and Mark Thornton. Obviously missing from the council was Brother André Robichaud, who had led the loyal opposition against some of Brother Martin's rigorous regulations concerning religious discipline. However, after Brother Felician resigned from the council in July 1953 to go to the missions, the general council renamed Brother André to the council, disregarding Brother Martin's suggestion that either Brothers Roland Smith, Bernard Tunney, or Martinian Pauc replace Brother Felician.

Increasing Demands

Enrollments in nearly all of the schools during this period steadily increased, overtaxing the facilities. For the school year ending in 1953, the province had more than 5,000 boys in its 20 establishments in the United States. The province also conducted Catholic mission schools in Gulu and Nyapea, Uganda, as well as a juniorate in Nyapea, a school in Okaru in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and one in Nyeri in the Kenya Colony of British East Africa. The province had tried to leave the Sudan at the end of the 1951 term, but the general council blocked the move. Later, under pressure from the general council to open a school in Tanganyika, the provincial council agreed to do so in June of 1953, but only if it would be given permission to close the school in Okaru. Also, in May of 1953, the provincial council declined an invitation from the general council to open a school in England.

Personnel Shortages

By 1953 the total number of brothers in the province had increased to 261: 203 perpetual professed and 58 temporary professed, of whom 21 were scholastics. Of the professed, exclusive of scholastics, 202 were engaged in administration and teaching, 28 were in manual employments, and only 10 were sick or retired. Yet in spite of what seems like large numbers by today's standards, the provincial council in 1953 was faced with serious problems of manpower to meet all of its personnel commitments. For the 1952-53 school year, the province had committed itself to take over St. Francis de Sales in

Houma, Louisiana, and to send four brothers there. Also, additional personnel would be needed at the new school being built in New Orleans to accommodate 750 students and scheduled to open for 1954. The provincial had to find brothers for these two schools, and the province debt of $1,350,000 severely limited its option of hiring lay teachers.

There was a strong temptation to cut short the training of scholastics. Brother Martin had managed for the most part to resist it until August of 1954 when he took out 13 of the 17 third-year scholastics because he desperately needed teachers. In September he called upon two of the remaining four. In 1954-55 it was not the common practice to hire lay teachers in the high schools except as coaches, but Brother Martin saw no alternative. That year the number of laymen teaching in the brothers' 13 schools increased from 26 to 36, mainly on the high school level. The *Annuaire* for that year states that lay teachers were not readily available and that salaries were a financial burden on the schools. Consequently, some schools were understaffed, brothers were overloaded with courses to teach, and their classrooms bulged with students.

Whether Brother Martin was within the province or traveling abroad, these personnel demands weighed heavily on his mind. In 1955 when he visited the African missions, he sought assurance that the sacrifices the province was making in sending personnel to the missions were paying off and the brothers were well employed. On his way back from Africa, he stopped in Rome to meet with Brother Josaphat Vanier, superior general. Uppermost on Brother Martin's mind was his acute shortage of manpower. Lack of personnel had forced him to turn down more than 10 fine offers for the brothers to staff new schools. Since the brothers' schools were prospering and enjoying excellent reputations, such requests for brothers arrived frequently. Brother Martin pleaded unsuccessfully with the superior general that the province be exempt from sending three brothers to Rome for the grand novitiate, a year-long program of intense religious renewal. He did, however, obtain permission to reduce the required number from three to two. He also took the opportunity to plead with the general council to set up a program in English for brothers from the United States to replace the *Cent Jours* program, which was a type of second novitiate conducted in French at St. Anicet, Canada.

Brother Alexis's Recommendations

The move to staff schools with more lay teachers did not sit well with many brothers in the province. In fact, the attitude of many brothers that lay teachers were a necessary evil prevailed throughout the '50s. In 1956 Brother Alexis Klee, the assistant general who made a canonical visitation of the province that year, wrote in his report to Rome: *"A number of lay teachers are now teaching in our high schools. Some of them are excellent teachers, but the greater number are not. They are poorly prepared especially in methods of teaching and often have no idea of discipline in the classroom. Some do not seem to feel the need of it. With Directors who have so much to do, even to teaching in some schools, these teachers cannot receive the proper training necessary to do good work. It would be in the interest of the Province both educationally and financially to eliminate these men from our schools as Brothers become available. Exception may be made for athletic directors and specialized teachers."* (1956 Visitation Report, pp. 8-9) Contrary to Brother Alexis's wishes, the number of lay teachers in the brothers' schools increased to 74 in 1957.

In his report of 1956, Brother Alexis offered several other suggestions aimed at improving the academic quality of the brothers' schools. He advised that directors should not be in charge of both the school and local community, especially in large communities. He saw that they were overburdened with too many tasks. Visits to classes, monthly interviews with the brothers, meetings with their local councils all suffered. He suggested also that the province name a supervisor of studies to visit the various schools and to work with the teachers in drawing up a syllabus of studies similar for all of the schools.

Withdrawal from Muskogee

The provincial council was forced to close St. Joseph's in Muskogee at the end of the 1954-55 school session in order to release brothers to staff its new schools under construction. The brothers had been at St. Joseph's for 52 years. Even after so long, it was always a struggle to find students in an area with so few Catholics. Recruiting them meant hard, slow work. At the time, Muskogee was a city of about 50,000 people; yet only a small number of St. Joseph's students came from there. In 1954 the school enrolled 113 students 71 boarders and 42 day students. Forty-seven boarders and 31 day students were Catholic. The diocese of Oklahoma City-Tulsa, to which the province

sold the school and property for only $25,000, much less than its real value, planned to build a coeducational school to be administered by the diocese. Thus, the council concluded that it was time to withdraw the 11 brothers from Muskogee and use them to help staff new schools being planned.

Three New Schools

During Brother Martin's second term, three new province-owned schools were constructed. Cor Jesu High School in New Orleans, designed to accommodate 750 boys, was completed in 1953-54 at a cost of $1 million. Plans for this new school had actually begun back in 1944 when Brother Martinian, provincial at the time, foresaw that St. Aloysius was fast becoming overcrowded. In an act of shrewd planning, he bought seven acres in the growing residential section of New Orleans called Gentilly Terrace; but lack of money and personnel kept delaying the building. Only the perseverance of Brother Martin, as well as his financial ability, finally made the project possible.

For several years plans had been in the making for the brothers to construct a large secondary school in New York. Again it was Brother Martinian, who as provincial dreamed of building a high school in the North and had the foresight in 1946 to purchase two city blocks consisting of about five acres of then-vacant land in Jackson Heights, Queens, Long Island, New York. Again the fulfillment of Brother Martinian's dream was left to Brother Martin. With his customary drive, energy, and know-how, he propelled the project to its completion. In 1954 construction began on McClancy Memorial High School to accommodate 1,000 boys. Just as he had done with the construction of Cor Jesu, Brother Martin often donned a hard hat and inspected the McClancy construction site to assure that everything was done according to specifications.

While construction of McClancy proceeded, plans for a new school in Baton Rouge were progressing as well. In March of 1956, on the feast of St. Joseph, Brother Martin was the principal speaker at the kickoff supper held in the school gym at Catholic High. His purpose was to motivate the 150 campaign workers assembled to go out and collect $600,000 toward construction of the new school. The province hired an outside consultant at the cost of $30,000 to oversee the fundraising campaign. Even with this expensive consultant's help, the drive garnered only $350,000 in donations and pledges, some of which never materialized. Original plans had to be

scaled back to construct only 12 classrooms instead of 24; a residence designed for 24 brothers featured very small bedrooms with semiprivate baths.

Construction in Africa

Despite such struggles for funding, Brother Martin pressed on with the most expansive construction program in the history of the province. Not only was building going on within the province, but also there were construction plans for the African missions. During Brother Martin's visitation of the houses in Kenya and Uganda in July of 1955, he approved final plans for the construction of Immaculate Heart of Mary Juniorate-Novitiate-Scholasticate. The all-purpose formation complex would be located at Alokolum near Gulu on a 50-acre tract of land leased from the government. Brother Martin carried with him the provincial council's approval to establish a novitiate and to construct the buildings for an estimated $50,000. (Provincial Council Minutes, November 26, 1954)

Much of the credit for the construction in Alokolum goes to Brother Felician Fourrier, who resigned from Brother Martin's provincial council in 1953 in order to go to Africa to lend some stability to the brothers in Kenya who were anxious during the Mau-Mau uprisings. In 1954 Brother Martin sent him to Alokolum, Uganda, to take charge of the construction, a task for which he was well qualified and one which he carried out with distinction. The building project took several years. So the new chapel was not yet constructed when on Christmas Day 1955, the first six African novices, all Kenyans from the Kikuyu tribe, publicly pronounced vows at Alokolum in the presence of Brother Howard McLaughlin, director general and novice master. The previous day, three postulants had received the cassock as novices. For the brothers this was a most fitting occasion to celebrate their Silver Anniversary in Africa.

A Third Term

Brother Martin's second term as provincial ended in November of 1955. With major construction projects underway in the province, the general council renamed this man of boundless energy for a third term and gave him the same provincial council: Brothers Gilbert, André, Mark, and Claver. Brother Martin and his council faced many challenges during his third term: payment for the

constructions, controversy over the handbook of customs, and the location of the novitiate.

The province had several major financial headaches in the late '50s. Besides the costs for the building in progress at McClancy, the provincial council loaned St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis $150,000 in February of 1956. That amount covered most of the estimated $196,000 needed to construct an infirmary building and four classrooms. A major problem for the council was how to pay for the new school in Baton Rouge, under construction for a low bid of $480,900. Of that amount, only $345,000 was covered by pledges, and the province had to provide the remaining $150,000. Matters grew more serious as final costs mounted to $750,000 and some of the pledges were not being honored. The province, which had already loaned the school $200,000, faced perilous financial pressure.

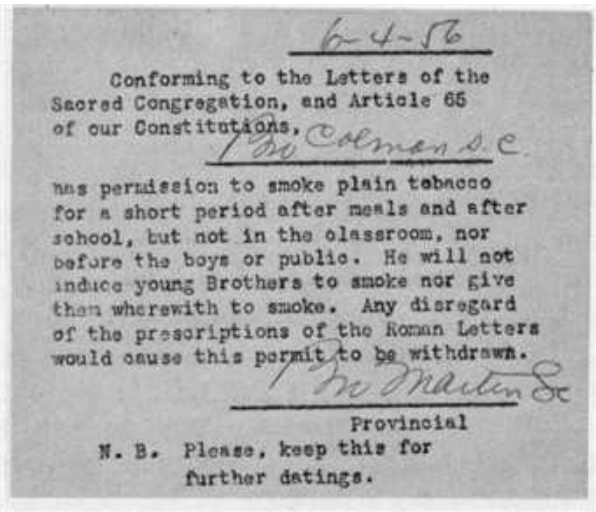
Handbook of Customs

In September of 1957 the question of the book of customs reached a boil. Rome had requested that each province draw up a book of customs and submit it to the general council for approval. At that time, provinces did not have a Directory as a supplement to the Rule, such as they do today. Brother Martin drew up a proposed copy of a Handbook of Customs which he presented to the provincial council for study and discussion. The majority of the council rejected it, considering many of the items in it as *"simply regulations of the Provincial which are apt to be changed, abolished, or added to by subsequent Provincials."* (Council Minutes, Sept. 29, 1957) Councilors, for example, recognized the province's custom of substituting silence during breakfast on Fridays to replace the fast prescribed by the Rule. Brother Martin, however, advocated silence at breakfast daily, something the councilors found not only too severe, but lacking in respect for what they considered legitimate custom and culture. It was merely his personal whim, some said.

Brother Martin felt trapped. With his usual forthrightness, he reminded the superior general that he was told to enforce the Rule, and the Rule as he understood it called for silence at breakfast. Even though no article in the English edition of the Rule specifically mentioned silence at breakfast, it was not just a personal whim of Brother Martin's. The Rule stated that silence would be kept at *"prescribed times and places."* And several superiors general, especially Brother Josaphat, prescribed breakfast as such a time. In 1956 in a

circular letter on silence, he referred to silence at breakfast as being called for by the Rule. Actually the 1946 General Chapter, which Brother Martin had attended, had added silence at breakfast to Article 130 of the Rule. In 1948 a revised edition of the Rule had been printed in French but not in English. Thus, the confusion.

In addition, Brother Martin received pressure from the Sacred Congregation of Religious in Rome and the general administration *"to repress and uproot"* illegitimate customs, especially in regard to any relaxation on the use of tobacco, an issue that just would not die. It is interesting to note that brothers who were granted permission to smoke were allowed two cartons per month during Brother Martin's mandate, but not *"the high priced filter cigarettes nor the king size packages."* (Provincial Circular #102, September 6, 1955)



6-4-56

Conforming to the Letters of the Sacred Congregation, and Article 65 of our Constitutions,

Br Colman S.C.

has permission to smoke plain tobacco for a short period after meals and after school, but not in the classroom, nor before the boys or public. He will not induce young Brothers to smoke nor give them wherewith to smoke. Any disregard of the prescriptions of the Roman Letters would cause this permit to be withdrawn.

Br Martin SC

Provincial

N. B. Please, keep this for further datings.

Sample smoker's permit issued by Brother Martin

As Brother Martin moved aggressively to tighten religious discipline, his campaign created conflict within his council. Controversy revolved around regulations on traveling, attendance at sports events, serving drinks, visiting friends, the study of catechism on weekends and during vacation periods, and attending movies. In his proposed Handbook of Customs, Brother Martin modeled many articles after a sample directory sent to him by the superior general. For Brother Martin, these items became questions of religious discipline and loyalty, but many brothers had a different opinion. In his frustration, Brother Martin wrote to the superior general: *"If I enforce them, I am damned by some over here if I don't, I am called to order by the higher superiors. All I want to do is my duty as I see it before God for the good of the community. Criticism won't deter me from duty."* (Letter, September 29, 1957)

Location of the Novitiate

The question of whether to relocate the Metuchen novitiate constantly recurred during Brother Martin's nine years of administration. The council had long considered moving the novitiate to a separate location and at the same time making more room at Metuchen for postulants. The opening of the juniorate in Daphne, Alabama, in 1950 had relieved some of the pressure at Metuchen, but not enough. The buildings were still overcrowded and in poor condition. Something more needed to be done. The council seriously studied the possibility of purchasing Todd Lodge at Blairstown, not far from Metuchen, and converting it into a new novitiate. But Brother Albertinus, superior general at the time, strongly opposed moving the novitiate from Metuchen which for him represented *"a tradition of 50 years and the resting place of our revered dead."* (Letter to Brother Martin, October 7, 1950) He suggested an additional building. In February of 1951, the council decided to borrow $200,000 for construction at Metuchen. Building plans proved to be too costly, however, at a projected price of $270,000. So existing facilities were repaired and moderately enlarged.

In 1951 Brother Martin's proposed solution to the overcrowding at Metuchen had called for moving the novices to Spring Hill, Alabama. In 1955 with a new superior general in office, he proposed to move the novices to Daphne and all the juniors to Metuchen until another juniorate could be found in the South. But his council was divided. So he wrote to the general council, asking that it decide the matter. Aside from the reasons he gave concerning formation that it would be good to separate the novices from the juniors and that the teaching staff at the juniorate could be stronger he had other motives. In his letter to the general council, he explained how his *"back was against the wall"* with manpower shortages. (Letter, June 26, 1955) For the 1955-56 school year, he needed 156 teachers; he only had 149. Some of those, he said, should not be teaching. By consolidating the juniorates at Metuchen and moving the novices to Daphne, Brother Martin figured he could save four teachers. Rome, however, refused to intervene.

The question of the novitiate remained unsettled for the rest of Brother Martin's term. In July 1957, Bishop James A. McNulty of Paterson, New Jersey, offered to donate 30 acres of the Miller estate near the town of Butler for a novitiate. Then in August, Brother Martin met with Bishop Francis Kreough of Baltimore to explore the possibility of setting up a novitiate in Washington, DC. The council also explored other possibilities: moving the novitiate to Daphne and building a juniorate in Bay St. Louis; selling

Metuchen and constructing a juniorate at Coindre Hall; and even establishing a juniorate in Ireland where vocations were plentiful.

The more possibilities that the council considered, the more clouded the issue became. Minutes of the provincial council meeting of September 29, 1957, reveal the council's confusion and inability to decide the issue: *"The proposal to establish a separate novitiate was postponed and may be left to a subsequent administration for solution. It was decided to inform the bishop of Paterson that we could not accept at this time the property and buildings which he offered for the purpose of establishing a novitiate. It is the opinion of this council that the better thing to do is to establish the novitiate at Daphne in the present buildings and to erect a juniorate of suitable size on property which we already own at Bay St. Louis. . . . The council would like to establish a juniorate in Ireland and asks permission of the general council to take steps to find out whether the hierarchy in Ireland would permit this."*

Authorities in Rome, sensitive to the division within the provincial council, did not grant permission to move the novitiate. Brother Martin clearly saw that if he did not force the issue the *status quo* would prevail. His council wanted to wait and let the next provincial chapter decide the issue. Brother Martin wrote to the superior general on April 30, 1958, again asking the general council to move the novitiate. First, he maintained, Metuchen was not suitable for a novitiate because its use by the postulants deprived the novices of privacy. The Daphne property, he argued, was better for a novitiate because of its seclusion. Here the provincial council agreed, but members could not accept the idea of only one juniorate. Resolutely, Brother Martin argued that it was a shameful waste of manpower to operate two juniorates since some classes at Daphne had only four or five boys. He figured that with larger classes in one juniorate, the province could offer a better education with fewer teaching brothers. For him, it was a question of economics and common sense, but it remained an unresolved issue throughout his administration.

New Provincial Residence

During Brother Martin's third term, his provincial office was located in the old Basty Hall on Esplanade Avenue near St. Aloysius in New Orleans. In February of 1955, the Rev. John F. Basty, pastor of St. Augustine's Church in New Orleans and a very close friend and benefactor of the brothers, purchased for $65,000 the former residence of Archbishops Chapelle, Blenk, and Shaw. This once palatial house was situated on property adjacent to St. Aloysius. He

offered it as a special gift to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, asking only that St. Augustine students be accepted by the brothers at reduced rates. The provincial council readily agreed and obtained ownership of the building. Soon after its acquisition, the main building, called Basty Hall, was converted into much needed classrooms for St. Aloysius, while the old chancery offices became the new office and residence of the provincial.

Price of Success

In the late '50s, the brothers' schools enjoyed a period of popularity and prosperity never before equaled in the history of the province. (*Annuaire*, 52:55) Offers from bishops begging the brothers to take over diocesan schools poured into the provincial office. Bishops were building new schools to take care of the baby boomers who would swamp their high schools in the '60s. One such offer that Brother Martin found irresistible came from Texas. In August of 1958, the provincial council committed the brothers to manage the boys' division of a new Catholic high school due to open in 1961-62 in Dallas.

But success had its price. The writer of the 1959-60 *Annuaire* article reported the situation: *"Year after year, the same complimentary compliant. Our schools are overcrowded. This year was no exception. Many applicants had to be turned away from our doors because of lack of classroom facilities. The process of making selections by examinations was still used in most of our schools. It is most unfortunate that so many had to be turned away because of low grades on the test, but more so by strained facilities. Numerically and financially our schools are in an era of prosperity. The reputation of the Brothers as teachers, as molders of character, as friends of youth is at its peak."* (*Annuaire*, 54:92)

Another price of success was the toll taken on the overworked brothers who taught crowded classes every period of the day. But as usual the brothers manifested a true family spirit, as well as a sense of dedication and professionalism. In spite of so many overworked brothers, province authorities were still reluctant to hire lay teachers. This was partly due to so many financial commitments and partly due to the prevailing attitudes of the times. In a 1958-59 *Annuaire* article, the writer commented: *"We have many laymen teaching in our schools. They are doing an excellent job, but this is not the ideal situation. Parents want their boys taught by the Brothers. If all our schools are staffed entirely with Brothers and the laymen are kept at two or*

three to handle the athletics, our work will be more effective and our religious discipline stronger." (*Annuaire*, 53:72)

Chapter Delegates

In November of 1958, Brother Martin presided for a last time over the provincial chapter. The 30 delegates, meeting in Basty Hall on the corner of Esplanade Avenue and St. Claude Street in New Orleans, elected Brothers André Robichaud and Mark Thornton as delegates to accompany Brother Martin to the general chapter in Rome. Also attending the general chapter by right of office was Brother John Moore, representing the district in Uganda as its regional superior. Delegates at the chapter re-elected Brother Josaphat, superior general, and Brother Alexis, assistant general, for another term of six years.

Members of the 1958 Provincial Chapter at Basty Hall in New Orleans: *Bottom Row*: Brothers Maurice Chatras, Albertinus Juge, Gilbert Reuter, Martin Hernandez, Claver Thomas, André Robichaud, Mark Thornton, and Benedict Gaudin. *Middle Row*: Brothers Ignatius Anderson, Aldric Smith, Eric Goguen, Celsus Craffey, Ralph McGarry, Gordian Udinksy, Howard McLaughlin, Flavian Udinsky, Roland Smith, and Remigius David. *Top Row*: Brothers Lee Barker, Marcel Riviere, Joseph Ringloff, Patrick McDonough, Reginald Lavell, Hubert Bonnette, James Roussell, Philip Lewis, Bernon Walsh, Basil Harrington, Carol Chassaignac, and Foster Zibilich

End of an Era

Brother Martin's three terms as provincial spanned most of the '50s, a postwar decade with a serious tone in the United States. People were still war-hardened and military influence was still strong. Life was very much prim and spartan, calm and ordered. Throughout the country, this decade was dedicated to the development of big business, of building and growth. *Newsweek* noted: *"The citizens of the '50s were relatively docile, with more consciousness of duties and less of rights than we have."* (January 3, 1994) It was a period of respectability; and people were generally conformists.

While the cold war dominated international politics, issues of racial equality surfaced on the national scene. But in the South, especially, segregation still prevailed. Above all, during the '50s, family values continued to shape the lives of most children. In the Church, all was calm. Respect and reverence for authority and things religious were the rule rather than the exception. Brother Martin, truly a man of the decade, found this cultural environment perfectly suited to his leadership style. And to guide his brothers in the religious life, he inherited a well-established Rule which clearly defined expectations and dictated practically every detail of daily living. The Rule's emphasis on personal sanctification through hard work and sacrifice served well to assure success in the schools. A strong community identity characterized the brothers' schools, making them ever more popular and overcrowded.

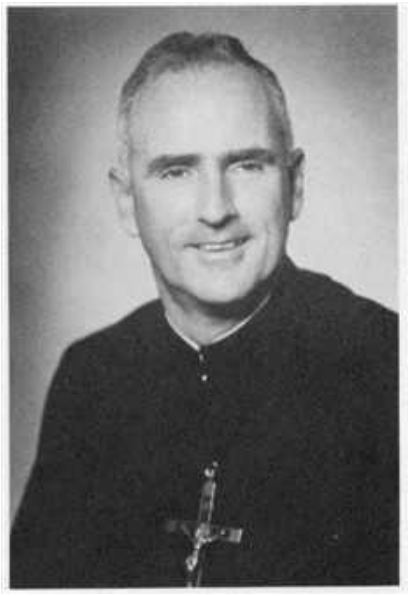
During his nine years as provincial, Brother Martin never lost sight of his single goal: to form solid religious, sure of their identity. He exhorted his brothers on November 1, 1950: *"God, how we do need MEN, generous men, self-sacrificing men, fervent men, men who will be Religious to the core and zealous Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."* Early in his administration, Brother Martin shared his hopes with Brother Albertinus, superior general at the time: *"What I could do with more REAL MEN and a few dollars."*

Obviously, Brother Martin found both. And with a Spartan economy, he managed both men and dollars with great skill to build a solid province. Responding to words of praise from Brother Josaphat, superior general, Brother Martin wrote to him at the end of his term as provincial in a letter dated November 8, 1958: *"I am deeply appreciative of your personal note expressing your appreciation of my efforts during the past nine years. The human in me causes this feeling. I do believe, though, that you know that whatever I did was through Him, with Him, by Him, and for Him as duty and my conscience directed."*

CHAPTER 5

BROTHER ANDRÉ

(1958-1964)



When the general council named Brother André Robichaud the 12th provincial of the United States Province in November of 1958, it fulfilled most brothers' expectations. The province had sent a strong signal to Rome when it elected Brother André as the first of two delegates to accompany Brother Martin Hernandez, the outgoing provincial, to the general chapter. Brother André was very popular. He had proved himself to be a conscientious teacher, a capable athletic coach, a dedicated adviser of student publications, an inspiring leader of student spiritual organizations, and an energetic and imaginative vocation director. His popularity and success as principal and president of St. Aloysius in New Orleans assured the brothers he would be a good provincial.

Brother André began his term as provincial with two experienced councilors and two new ones. Brother Mark Thornton, first councilor, had served six years in Brother Martin's administration and was principal of McGill Institute in Mobile. Brother Claver Thomas, director of the Sacred Heart Scholasticate in Spring Hill, had served nine years on previous councils. New to the provincial council were Brother Roland Smith, president of St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, and Brother Eric Goguen, principal of Monsignor McClancy High School in Jackson Heights, New York. The new council named Brother Martin to replace Brother André as president and principal at St. Aloysius.

Easygoing Approach

Brother André, like Brother Martin, was a hard worker much appreciated by his brothers, but his leadership style differed from Brother Martin's forceful and direct approach. Brother André was much more diplomatic and sensitive to

personal feelings. Thoughtful and personable by nature, Brother André tried as provincial to be a brother among his brothers, not letting his authority set him apart. The idea of authority primarily as a service rather than a position, however, was not yet fully appreciated during these pre-Vatican Council II years. Thus, some brothers, used to a hard-line approach, found Brother André's easygoing, gentle interaction with his confreres less than fully effective. Nevertheless, most brothers were looking forward to some loosening of the reins of authority following Brother Martin's administration. Since Brother André had led the loyal opposition in questioning some of Brother Martin's regulations, especially those regarding traveling and visiting friends, brothers expected relaxation of these and certain other restrictions.

Brother André tackled travel policies first. In his initial meeting with the local directors, he told them that trips and outings came under their control and that they should use their judgment. He suggested such community activities were a *"good means of easing community tension and increasing family joy and family spirit."* He immediately added that *"two outings per year are sufficient."* And he told directors: *"Keep trips to a minimum and avoid night trips as much as possible. You don't have to see <u>every</u> football game. . . . Be sure spiritual exercises are not neglected. You cannot give permission to a brother to spend the night at his home. You must obtain provincial permission for trips over a hundred miles one way."* (Minutes, August 27, 1960) Solo outings by a brother, including local superiors, to visit anyone, even a confessor or a doctor, were still totally taboo. Thus, while putting confidence in local directors, Brother André issued directives, the expected manner of exercising authority at the time. In general, the brothers responded faithfully and positively to this new approach.

Visit of the Assistant General

By the time of Brother Alexis Klee's canonical visitation of the province from February 7 to June 27, 1959, the spirit of the province was excellent. He reported: *"The Brother Directors throughout the Province have reacted very well to the confidence placed in them by Brother Provincial, but a few have taken the greater latitude given them as occasions to become too generous in their permissions, especially as regards travel and visiting."* (1959 Canonical Visitation Report, p. 4)

At that time, such canonical visitations included very thorough reports made to Rome on every aspect of the brothers' lives, especially those that involved religious discipline. For example, in his report Brother Alexis

commented that he was *"very pleased with the growing number, especially among the young, who have not taken up the habit of smoking or who have given it up. Of 224 Brothers, not counting the Scholastics, 125 do not smoke at all, or 56 percent of the Brothers in the Province."* (p. 11) As in the past, brothers who smoked were allotted two cartons per month. These were bought in bulk and given to the smokers.

While the spirit of the province was generally very good, there were some murmurings against the provincial and his manner of acting. Some of Brother André's attempts to modernize religious life were misunderstood and criticized. Other areas of contention included his getting rid of the cows at Metuchen; making personal interviews during his visits to the houses optional; giving birth to many unfounded rumors by joking with brothers about possible assignments; and planning to close summer camp at St. Stanislaus.

Some brothers especially criticized Brother André's purchase of an automobile for the provincial's private use. They thought that he should travel back and forth between the North and South by train, not by car. Others questioned the expense, especially since he got a new car, usually an Oldsmobile, annually. He had, in fact, worked out a good, economical system of trade-ins with the dealer across the street from St. Aloysius in New Orleans to get the Oldsmobile cheaper than a Ford, Chevrolet, or Plymouth more modest models considered in keeping with religious poverty of the '50s.

But perhaps the biggest crisis of Brother André's first term involved his assignments of Brother Martin, former provincial. Conflict arose concerning the authoritarian manner in which Brother Martin acted at St. Aloysius as local director and principal after his term as provincial. Strong leader and personality that he was, Brother Martin had trouble adapting to regular community life after his nine years as provincial. Brother André had to remove Brother Martin from leadership at St. Aloysius for what he and his council perceived to be the good of the community. To tell Brother Martin that was not an easy task. Brother Martin was then named director at the Bay. Again, after a very short time, he had to be removed because of his domineering attitude and impulsive judgments. Brother André then assigned Brother Martin to teach in Baton Rouge, a post which he readily accepted in a spirit of obedience.

The conflict would have ended there had Brother Alexis, an assistant general who was visiting the province at the time, not become personally involved – a rare instance of politics and meddling in the affairs of the province by higher authorities. Brother Alexis personified a prevalent attitude on the part of a few brothers that former major superiors merited special

treatment. Thus, he perceived Brother André's treatment of Brother Martin as unfair and unkind. He called the provincial to task for *"shelving"* an older, capable brother and being insensitive to his feelings and former rank. It should be kept in mind that not only was Brother Martin very popular with the higher authorities, it was due to his influence that Brother Alexis had been elected assistant general. Thus, Brother Alexis felt a need to intervene on Brother Martin's behalf – not that the former provincial asked for or even approved of his help.

Brother Alexis's intervention caught Brother André off guard and brought to a head a clash between the old and the new, raising it to the level of authority. Brother Alexis wrote a strong letter to Brother André and posted copies to the superior general and to Brother Albertinus, a former superior general and good friend of Brother Martin. In the letter, he accused Brother André of being *"impolite, uncharitable, prejudicial, and of using his authority in a wrong way."* Brother André was deeply hurt by this lack of support of the assistant general who questioned his motives and judgment. In a letter dated July 20, 1959, he offered his resignation to the general council and sent copies to the members of his own council. Brother Josaphat Vanier, superior general, offered Brother André his full support and refused his resignation. Such cases of politics among the brothers are indeed rare.

Most brothers characterize Brother André's first term of office as one of fraternal relationships with little hint of tough authoritarianism. And in his report on the province, Brother Alexis, assuming a more objective stance, stated that *"with his pleasing personality and cheerful disposition, and his always encouraging attitude"* Brother André *"won the trust and loyalty of the Brothers."* (1959 Report, p. 8) In his circulars, Brother André often praised the brothers. After a round of visitations he wrote: *"I admired the regularity of each house, the excellent director-inferior relationships, the spirit of fraternal charity and helpfulness among the brothers, the very good observance of the Great Silence, the spirit of cheerfulness among the brothers and also an excellent spirit among the boys we teach."* (Provincial Circular, May 6, 1959)

Brother Norbert Dies in Africa

Brother Norbert McAuliffe, founder and first director general of the province's missions in Africa, died in Gulu on the first Friday of July 1959. He was the first brother to die in Africa, so the brothers established a community cemetery in Alokolum, Uganda. As director general, he always maintained a

very respectful posture toward Church leaders in Africa and cooperated fully with them. As a sign of the respect they had for him, a large number of the clergy in British East Africa attended his funeral. The *Annuaire* noted the death of this holy brother thus: *"All in Africa agree that Brother Norbert was a saint because of his great charity, kindness, and love for the African. The Africans called him `the Brother who prays always.'"* (*Annuaire*, 53:71) Brother Norbert's holiness so impressed the brothers with whom he lived that almost 20 years later one of them, Brother Blaise Toups, began to pursue the cause for his beatification by the Church.

Preparation to Divide the Province

The year 1960 was a special year in the history of the United States Province. As provincial, Brother André had proved himself to be orderly, well-organized, and efficient; but his energies were not devoted to constructing buildings as his predecessor's had been. Rather, the main task of his first term as provincial was to prepare the province and the brothers for an administrative division of the United States Province into two provinces, one in the North and one in the South.

Such an idea had been discussed periodically ever since Brother Albertinus's term as superior general. In 1949 he had posed the question to Brother Gilbert, provincial, as to whether or not the time was favorable for a division of the province. Brother Gilbert realized that before any separation took place, the brothers in the North should have a revenue-producing high school. He responded to Brother Albertinus: *"Metuchen could be turned into a High School for day pupils and a limited number of boarding students. There is need for such a school here and I firmly believe it would be a great success and source of revenue. Francis Smith has some fine real estate properties listed for sale which he says would be ideal for a postulate, novitiate, etc. I intend to look at some of these places with B. Martinian. We shall not in any way commit ourselves. Just look around."* (Letter, August 19, 1949)

As early as 1950 there had been serious talk about dividing the United States Province into two provinces, North and South. The Province of Canada had been divided several times to create the provinces of Arthabaska, St. Hyacinthe, Montreal, Granby, Quebec, and New England. When Brother Martin announced to the brothers the establishment of another province in Canada, that of Rimouski, he reminded them of Brother Albertinus's motto: *"Multiply by dividing."* But Brother Martin explained to the brothers, *"In*

keeping with the above thought, I know that you have heard some talk about a division of our Province. I can tell you that this is not for the immediate future. But, please God, may it not be in the too distant future." (Circular, November 1, 1950) When the general council consulted Brother Martin about dividing the United States Province, he advised the council to wait, stating that before the division the brothers in New York needed a high school to earn substantial income.

Two years later, Brother Martin wrote to Brother Albertinus, agreeing that previous divisions had borne good results. But he was still hesitant: *"I agree about `la multiplication par la division a déjà fait ses preuves' but I am not too sure as to whether the New York section and the South should divide. Can you give me any idea as to how imminent this may be?"* (Letter, May 15, 1952) In 1953 when the general council suggested that the name of the province be changed from United States to New Orleans, the provincial council declined, saying that it would be better to wait for the division. (Council Minutes, Oct. 10, 1953)

In 1956 Brother Martinian Pauc, provincial from 1937 to 1946, sent an eight-page confidential letter and report in French from Coindre Hall to his friend Brother Victorius Mirandon of France, the first assistant general in Rome. It presented his personal views concerning *"the necessity of a division of the United States Province,"* and he suggested that the change take place after the general chapter of 1958. In his report, he referred to his experience as provincial and argued that such a large province presented problems geographically as well as numerically. He pointed out that traveling between North and South for visitations necessitated extended absences from one section or the other. He predicted that brothers in the South would oppose the division, but that *"the North must develop itself and we now have the opportunity."*

In a report accompanying his letter, Brother Martinian illustrated how the two new provinces, which he named New York and New Orleans, would each be better off by far than the United States Province after the division with Canada in 1900. That split left the United States with only 92 perpetual professed, many of them old, 17 temporary professed, no novices, no novitiate, and no postulants. And by some miracle, he said, the province survived. Even if the division of the province were to take place immediately, he insisted that each province would be stable in terms of personnel. But in terms of finances, he advised that it would be better to wait a few years to give the recently opened McClancy High School in New York time to get established as a sound financial source.

Thus, after the general chapter of 1958, the general council did indeed take up the topic of dividing the United States Province. But Rome moved slowly. Perhaps this was due in part to a letter from Brother Martin. Before leaving office as provincial, he had written to Rome about the possibility of moving the novitiate from Metuchen to Daphne: *"When and if the Province is divided (I hold that we won't be ready for this for several years), the House of Formation solution for the respective Provinces would be simple and equal – the Southern Province to construct its own Juniorate – the Northern Province to construct a Novitiate if they are not willing for a time to have a joint Novitiate at Daphne."* (Letter, April 10, 1958)

In 1959, the general council, concerned about Brother Martinian's impression that the Southern brothers opposed dividing the province, charged Brother Alexis to sound them out during his canonical visitation. His findings surprised the council: *"Among the Brothers in and around New York the sentiment for a division of the Province is very strong. In the South the Brothers are indifferent in respect to a division, most of them being neither for such a step or against it. There are differences between the two sections of the country: the system of education is different in many ways; the length of the school year is not the same, ending in late May in the South and in late June in the North; a critical attitude toward the Brothers of the South has crept into the minds of many Brothers of the North, and a feeling that they have not been treated justly in respect to constructions."* (Canonical Report, 1959, p. 24)

Brother Alexis recommended to the general council that a division be made some time in 1960. He encouraged an administrative separation along geographic lines of North and South even though the two provinces would emerge uneven in terms of personnel and revenue. His proposal would leave the North with 75 brothers in eight establishments and the South with 155 brothers in 14 houses.

Decision to Divide

On August 3 and on August 24, 1959, the provincial council of the United States carefully studied the division of the province and concluded the time was right for such a move. The provincial council unanimously requested that the general council proceed with the partition as soon as possible. The provincial council offered compelling arguments for the wisdom of this change: *"Opinion of Brothers favors immediate division; better incentive among Brothers for vocation work; state educational requirements differ North and*

South; save tremendously on travel; greater family spirit and esprit de corps; easier to obtain uniformity and maintain discipline; easier for administration, visitation, and better suited for retreats; problems in North and South differ; problems of Provincial cut in half." The council listed a few reasons against the division: *"temporary difficulty in teacher placement and staffing of schools; separation from friends and customs; possibility of establishing more prosperous schools greater in North."* (Provincial Council minutes, August 24, 1959)

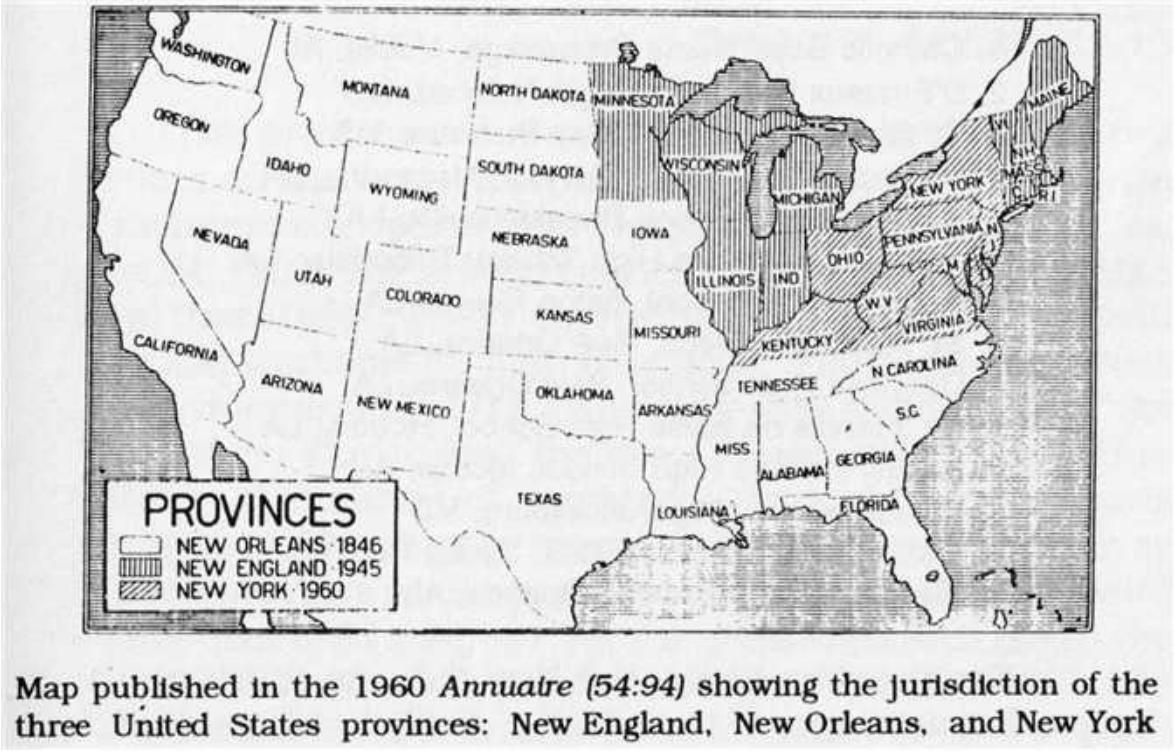
On January 19, 1960, the general council officially decided to divide the United States province, subject to approval by the Sacred Congregation of Religious. The next week, the Vatican granted permission to proceed, delegating power to the general council to approve final details of the division. In the meantime, Brother Josaphat, superior general, sent the provincial council detailed plans of the division to study before final approbation. The provincial council studied them and suggested a few minor revisions with the comment: *"We sincerely appreciate receiving this preliminary plan of the division beforehand. We all agree that it is fair to both proposed provinces and we feel that the division will cause no hard feelings whatever to either part."* (Council Minutes, January 23, 1960)

Terms of Division

On February 29 the general council finalized the terms of the division and decided that they would take effect March 19, 1960. Major considerations centered upon personnel, establishments, and finances. At the time of the division, the United States Province counted 288 professed brothers and 27 establishments, including brothers and schools in Africa.

After the division, the province of New York counted 98 professed brothers with nine novices and 25 juniors within the United States. The province of New Orleans had 167 professed brothers, 17 novices, and 37 juniors. Most brothers remained stationed wherever they were serving. During interviews with the brothers in 1959, Brother André had asked the brothers if they would prefer to be in the North or in the South after the province was divided; and he made assignments accordingly. Thus, at the time of the division, only four brothers in the North transferred to the South; and nine brothers in the South moved to the North, six in 1960 and three more in 1961. After that, transfers from one province to another took place only upon a brother's request

and with mutual agreement of the provincials and approval of the superior general.



Map published in the 1960 *Annuaire (54:94)* showing the jurisdiction of the three United States provinces: New England, New Orleans, and New York

The newly created province of New York accepted jurisdiction in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia. Thus, the New York Province assumed administration of eight establishments, four of them parish elementary schools in New York City:

1. St. Luke's Elementary School, Bronx, NY
2. St. Philip Neri Elementary School, Bronx, NY
3. St. Joseph's Elementary School, Bronx, NY
4. St. Rose of Lima Elementary School, Brooklyn, NY
5. Msgr. McClancy Memorial High School, Queens, NY
6. Coindre Hall Elementary and Boarding School, Huntington, Long Island, NY
7. St. Francis Elementary School, Metuchen, NJ
8. St. Joseph's House of Studies, juniorate and novitiate, Metuchen, NJ

The province of New Orleans received the states in the South and all states west of the Mississippi River except Minnesota, which the New England Province had obtained upon its establishment in 1945 when the St. Hyacinthe Province in Canada divided. Thus, the New Orleans Province maintained administration of 14 establishments:

1. Catholic Boys' Home Orphanage, Mobile, AL
2. D'Evereux Hall Orphanage, Natchez, MS
3. St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis, MS
4. Menard Memorial High School, Alexandria, LA
5. Catholic High School, Donaldsonville, LA
6. Thibodaux Catholic High School, Thibodaux, LA
7. Catholic High School, Baton Rouge, LA
8. St. Aloysius College, New Orleans, LA
9. Cor Jesu High School, New Orleans, LA
10. St. Francis de Sales High School, Houma, LA
11. McGill Institute High School, Mobile, AL
12. St. Aloysius College, Vicksburg, MS
13. Sacred Heart Scholasticate, Spring Hill, AL
14. Sacred Heart Juniorate, Daphne, AL

For the time being, the New Orleans Province was to keep administration of the mission district of Uganda-Kenya. Twenty-two of the 25 brothers working in the missions in 1960 belonged to the New Orleans Province. Two years later in February of 1962, at a joint meeting of the two provincial councils, the New York Province accepted responsibility for the Kenya District, which included two secondary schools in Nyeri and Nkubu. The New Orleans Province retained administration of the Uganda District with establishments in Nyapea and Alokolum, as well as a commitment to send brothers to Tororo.

In regard to finances, each province maintained ownership of the properties and buildings that were within its territory. Because of recent construction of several schools, the United States Province had a debt of almost $1.5 million in 1960. In his typical fashion, Brother Martin Hernandez, province treasurer, detailed the large debt to the exact penny:

Debt on McClancy at 3 %	$ 886,518.70
Metuchen mortgage at 3%	110,920.96
Huntington mortgage #1 at 3 %	222.73
Huntington mortgage #2 at 3 %	79,752.74
Cor Jesu mortgage at 4%	124,000.00
Loan from the Mission Fund	14,000.00
Baton Rouge loan at 4 %	35,000.00
Metuchen Building Fund loan at 3%	78,000.00
Total:	$1,328,415.13

This province debt was divided equally between the two provinces on the basis of a plan drawn up by Brother Martin and unanimously approved by the provincial council. (Minutes, August 24, 1959) The general council, however, revised the plan several times before finally approving it to assure that it would be fair and workable for both provinces. For its part, the New York Province assumed the major long-term $886,518.70 debt on McClancy. For its part, the New Orleans assumed all other liabilities a number of mortgages and short-term loans totaling $441,896.43 plus interest. To balance the ledger so that each province would pay approximately $650,000 toward the total debt of $1,328,451.13, the general council asked the New Orleans Province to pay the New York Province $200,000 in four annual installments of $50,000 each.

Although the debts were large, each province was financially sound from the start and able to manage its debt. According to Brother Martin's report to the councils, projected income for the New York Province with its seven schools would be about $218,000 annually; for the New Orleans Province with 12 schools, two of which were orphanages, it would be about $209,000 annually. Estimated annual debt payments ranged in the neighborhood of $60,000 for New York and $110,000 for New Orleans. Each province was left with sufficient funds for operational expenses and further growth. It is interesting to note that at the time of the division, the United States Province had no savings account or investments other than what was called the Metuchen Building Fund. The New York Province retained possession of that small fund which amounted to $6,158.21.

New Administrations

The general council named Brother Eric Goguen to a three-year term as the first provincial of the New York Province. Previously, Brother Eric had served as principal of McClancy High School and as a member of the provincial council for three years. His new provincial council consisted of Brothers Gilbert Reuter, former provincial and past novice master for 26 years; Harold (Walter) Bluhm, teacher at McClancy; Aldric Smith, novice master the past two years; and Alexander (Albert) Guarino, director of Coindre Hall.

In the New Orleans Province, the same administration carried on with Brother Felician Fourrier, who had resigned from the provincial council in 1953 to go to Africa, replacing Brother Eric. Thus, Brother André continued his first term as provincial until November of 1962 with a council consisting

of Brothers Mark Thornton, Claver Thomas, Roland Smith, and Felician Fourrier.

In general the brothers of both new provinces expressed satisfaction with the manner of the division of the original province. Brother Maurice Chatras, provincial of the United States Province from 1912-19, was in the province when the first division was made in 1900 with Canada. The *Province Monthly* published some of the sentiments of Brother Maurice and other old-timers who lived through two divisions of their province:

"We were called young brothers in 1900 when our province was divided into the provinces of Canada and the United States.... Our youth was needed . . . . Vocations were few, fires destroyed some of our houses, yellow fever took its toll . . . . Morale was somewhat low during the first decades of this century. . . . But Providence guided us . . . . We struggled, grew, and then emerged as a large province . . . . Yes, the Sacred Heart has blessed us . . . . Now we are in our eighties . . . . Again our province is divided . . . . North and South . . . . God bless our United States provinces." (*Province Monthly*, 13:4, March-April, 1960, p. 3)

Brother Eric, provincial of New York, summed up the sentiment of the New York brothers when he wrote to Brother Josaphat, superior general, following his first provincial council meeting: *"We had our first meeting today. Thank you for being so fair in this division. I am sure that all agree that the division was fair in every respect. Each section has its own peculiar problems. We will do our best to co-operate with the General Council in spreading the work of the Sacred Heart."* (Letter, March 19, 1960) Brother André expressed his sentiments very simply in a note to the superior general: *"It came off without a hitch."*

Recruiting and Formation

After the division of the United States Province, the New Orleans provincial council in November of 1960 proposed to the New York council to have a common novitiate at Daphne and a combined juniorate at Metuchen. The plan was accepted unanimously by the New York council on November 24 and approved by the general council on December 2. But some brothers in the South, wanting to maintain a juniorate at Daphne, claimed that such a move would be unconstitutional since the 1958 chapter of the former United States Province had voted 17-12 against transferring the novitiate to Daphne and moving all the juniors to Metuchen (1958 Chapter, Article 14). These

brothers argued that only an agreement between the two provincial chapters, not between the councils, could reverse the chapter decision because *"decisions of a provincial chapter remain obligatory until repealed or modified by a subsequent provincial chapter."* (*Rule*, Article 406) Brother André requested a ruling from Rome. But in the meantime, the New York council found what it considered an ideal property for a novitiate in Belvidere, New Jersey, and bought it in January 1961.

Thus, novices for both provinces continued at Metuchen until the novitiate moved to Belvidere in August 1961. This combined novitiate at Belvidere served both provinces until August 1968. Each province maintained its own juniorate as before, one in Metuchen and the other in Daphne; but now seniors would remain at Daphne rather than going to Metuchen. All scholastics from both provinces continued at Spring Hill until 1968. In 1968 the New York council decided that their first-year scholastics should attend universities closer to home. The scholasticate closed the following year.

The division of the province brought renewed emphasis on recruiting, always a constant in provincial circulars. In his first circular to the New Orleans Province, Brother André pointed out that the province was not young: almost half the brothers were over 40. He wrote: *"The division left us with 156 perpetual professed, 32 temporary professed and 6 novices. Four brothers are between the ages of 81-87; 6 brothers between the ages of 71-80; 8 brothers between the ages of 61-70; SEVENTEEN brothers between the ages of 51-60; FIFTY brothers between the ages of 41-50; FORTY-SEVEN brothers between the ages of 31-40; 52 brothers between the ages of 21-30; and 4 brothers under 20. Definitely we cannot call ourselves a young province."* (Circular, March 26, 1960)

Efforts at recruiting were paying off. Brother André, a former vocation director himself, assured that the province always had a full-time vocation director, someone young and dynamic, to coordinate efforts in the various schools. In 1958 Brother Donnan Berry followed Brother Ashton Brisolara in this role; two years later Brother Jean Sobert replaced Brother Donnan, who accepted a nomination to the grand novitiate in Rome. With 19 juniors at Daphne and 20 more scheduled to enter in September of 1960, Brother André still called upon the brothers to redouble their vocation efforts to inspire even more young men to take up the challenge of religious life. He posed this puzzling question to the brothers: *"Do we need a new juniorate in the South? We'll never know until we declare Daphne unfit because of lack of space."*

Daphne was crowded with 35 juniors in 1960-61. To make matters worse the government was considering a plan to plow a federal highway through Daphne, taking with it part of the juniorate property. Pressing forward to solve these problems, the New Orleans council began looking for property to build a new juniorate for 75 boys. A site 43 miles from New Orleans, close to the Redemptorist House of Studies between Lacombe and Slidell in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, was found for a new juniorate. On June 16, 1961, through the generosity of Mrs. J. G. Chaignaud of New Orleans, the province bought 50 acres for $12,500. But the large province debt prevented the possibility of borrowing in order to build. Besides there were already signs of a falling off in young vocations which raised questions about the need of a larger facility. So, in May of 1962, the council decided to improve the buildings at Daphne rather than construct a new juniorate.

Director of Studies

With its school constructions completed and the province division accomplished, the provincial administration turned its attention to the academic programs of the schools. It addressed a long-standing directive for the council to appoint a director of studies. Recommendations of several past canonical visitation reports by Brother Alexis Klee as well as resolutions of provincial chapters in 1952, 1955, and 1958 repeatedly asked the provincial council to name a brother as supervisor of studies for the province. The provincial chapter of 1958 resolved that *"a Province School Supervisor be appointed, that he promote an annual teachers' conference starting with the 1958-59 session, and that in conjunction with the principals he make a survey of the needs of the schools in various fields of subject matter and administration."*

Brother Felician Fourrier, principal and local director at St. Aloysius in New Orleans, became the first director of studies. Though the position was only part-time in 1960, Brother Felician went to work immediately planning a comprehensive Teachers' Institute to be held at Bay St. Louis from February 9-11, 1961. Two of those days were school days, and Brother André told the directors to close their schools because he expected every teaching brother in the province to participate.

One of the goals of the province at the time was to draw up province-wide syllabuses for each subject in order to assure uniform academic excellence in all of the brothers' schools. Brother Felician chaired a central

committee composed of three school principals, Brothers Carol Chassaignac, Flavian Udinsky, and Remigius David. This group coordinated the work of 14 subject subcommittees and two special committees, one on the Brothers of the Sacred Heart philosophy of education and the other on guidance. Seventy brothers were involved in these committees, a few serving on more than one. Each subject subcommittee was charged with drawing up a tentative syllabus before the scheduled Teachers' Institute.

In a letter addressed to all brothers in January 1961, Brother Felician explained that the three-day institute would provide time for subcommittee meetings *"to give the Brothers who teach the various subjects an opportunity to meet with the members of the committees who have drawn up the syllabuses and to discuss the syllabuses with them."* For the assembly itself, Brother Felician invited outside experts such as Dr. Charles Boyle of the English Department of Spring Hill College and Dr. William Wayne Miller of LSU-Alexandria. Brother Clement Cosgrove was asked to speak on "Our Philosophy of Education."

This province-sponsored educational assembly, the first since 1937, succeeded so well that the brothers asked for another one the following year. Thus, on November 11-12, 1962, the brothers gathered again for a two-day Teachers' Institute held at the Bay during which they evaluated the various syllabuses after their first trials in the classrooms. These two province assemblies consolidated efforts in the classroom and provided brothers with information on the latest trends in education the so-called new math and modern English, the use of laboratories in teaching foreign languages, and the many changes in science due to space explorations.

Efforts to bring some sort of standardization to the curriculum in the various schools not only strengthened the academic programs but proved beneficial for brothers when they were transferred from one school to another. This renewed emphasis on professionalism also put pressure on teachers who previously had a free hand in designing their own courses. They now had to work more closely with the various school departments which were beginning to value teamwork more and more. The entire movement also put pressure on school principals to act more professionally by making greater efforts to assign brothers within their major or minor fields of study, a movement in keeping with the higher degrees that brothers were earning in specialized fields.

Increased Professionalism

Spurred on by Brother André's constant theme of professionalism in his circulars, teaching brothers throughout the province responded with a renewed fervor for professional enhancement. Even national events served to invigorate scholarship. With the strong emphasis on space exploration after Alan Sheppard became the first American in space in May of 1961 one month after the first Russian-manned flight the United States government began sponsoring National Science Foundation Grants to encourage study of math and science. Many brothers took full advantage of such offers. The *Annuaire* for 1962 reported that it was common *"to see grayhaired Brothers attending classes with the young men who just came out teaching. During the summer months scores of Brothers return to the universities to pursue these courses and the Brothers stationed in New Orleans during the year take the opportunity of attending classes on Saturdays."* (56:61-62)

The thrust toward renewed professionalism put an end to fudging on state reports. It had been a common practice in the past for principals in both private and public schools to list phantom professionals on state personnel reports. Sometimes uncertified teachers slid by with a deceased brother's teaching certificate. Names of certified teachers appeared at times on more than one annual state report. Occasionally a brother listed doubly had to be rushed from one place to another for an upcoming inspection. To list the name of a certified brother teaching in the African missions on a state report was especially tempting. Besides helping the principal overcome certification problems, it also assured that the missionary's teaching license remained valid during his stay in Africa, eliminating recertification difficulties when he returned.

Second Term: Signs of Decline

In October of 1961, Brother André was renamed by the general council to a second term of three years as provincial of the New Orleans Province. Brother Roland was named first councillor and Brother Felician, second councillor. Brother Marcel Riviere, scholastic master at Spring Hill, and Brother Lee Barker, junior master at Daphne, joined the provincial council for the first time. During Brother André's second term of office, signs of decline in the province began to surface. The council was forced to turn down 11 requests from bishops to take over schools. The manpower was not there for

further expansion. Only the previous year, in September of 1961, the council had named Brother Martin Hernandez the first principal at a new Catholic high school in Dallas, Texas, in keeping with all of the terms of the contract he had negotiated with the diocese three years earlier during his final year as provincial. This would be the last school that the province would open for another 20 years.

Already signs of a decrease in young men entering religious life were becoming apparent. In the *Annuaire* of 1963, the reporter noted: *"Recruiting has prospered among the older boys but seems to be failing among the younger. Though the numbers in the Daphne Juniorate are low, the boys are older, with the largest senior class in the history of Daphne."* (58:40) That largest class contained 10 seniors. For the past two years there had been no freshman classes at Daphne, but there were six older postulants who had finished high school before joining the formation program at Spring Hill. Most brothers at the time interpreted this phenomenon simply as a movement toward delayed decision-making on the part of young men, rather than the beginning of a real vocation crisis.

Deaths, retirements, and departures were taking their toll. In spite of the move toward more professionalism, Brother André continued, just as his predecessors had done in a manpower crisis, to take young brothers out of the scholasticate before they completed their degrees. In 1962 more than a dozen brothers were teaching without a degree. For some, that meant many summer school sessions to complete the bachelor's degree. To afford these brothers and others an opportunity to attend college during the summer months, the provincial council closed Camp Stanislaus which employed almost 30 brothers in its operation.

Canonical Visitation of 1962

In selecting an assistant general to make the canonical visitation of the New Orleans Province during October and November of 1962, Brother Josaphat, superior general, chose Brother Jules Ledoux rather than Brother Alexis Klee. Many brothers of the province knew and respected Brother Jules. Each summer six to 10 brothers had attended the 100-day renewal sessions of the second novitiate which he directed at St. Anicet in Canada. But unlike Brother Alexis, who knew the province and its brothers well, Brother Jules found Southern life quite different from what he was accustomed to in Canada.

Coming from the strict religious French Canadian background of Québec, Brother Jules found life in the South very easygoing, and he characterized it by a spirit of naturalism: *"The weather, the environment, the affableness of the people, all may contribute to a certain extent to view material comfort as the normal thing."* After visiting the juniorate at Daphne, he concluded, *"The Southern boy enjoys a number of commodities at home: he is kind, obliging but does not impress by will-power."* (Canonical Report, p. 33) He found a number of customs in the province disturbing and not in keeping with religious discipline. For example, he reported the following as *"abuses or relaxations"* of the Rule: smoking during class preparation at night, not wearing a suit coat while driving a car, playing tennis or basketball in shorts, lounging in reclining chairs in the community rooms, using nicknames, calling the local director *"boss,"* and indulging an excessive sense of democracy.

Cultural and religious differences certainly colored Brother Jules' perception and influenced some aspects of his evaluation of the province, but his overall assessment struck home. He observed that the brothers enjoyed a strong community life and were dedicated to and effective in the apostolate. The care given to the older men favorably impressed Brother Jules as *"a model of its kind."* He reported: *"The old Brothers are happy because they share in the burden of work; in every house they receive the attention, respect and the bit of teasing that make them feel good."* (Report, p. 9) The amount of work that the 103 teaching brothers did with a spirit of total dedication, cheerfulness, and mutual understanding astounded him. To relieve overworked brothers, he advocated *"drastic"* means of hiring more lay teachers since the 69 working with the brothers in 1962 seemed an insufficient number. Such a solution, he pointed out, would also permit some brothers to undertake full-time studies and others to return to the scholasticate to complete their degree work. Brother Jules lauded the decision to close Camp Stanislaus to allow brothers to study as *"a praise-worthy move"* even though some brothers resented seeing such an old institution discontinued.

After thanking the brothers for their outstanding hospitality, Brother Jules encouraged them to reassess their spiritual values especially in light of their apostolate. (Letter to the Brothers, December 8, 1962) Guard, he urged them, against a spirit of naturalism or worldliness. He found the brothers weak in areas of spirituality – what today would be referred to as practices of religious life. Brother Jules pointed out that local directors, all of whom were overworked in the schools, did not give bi-weekly exhortations to the brothers as prescribed by the Rule. Nor did most of them hold monthly interviews with the brothers, especially in the large houses.

Brother Jules held Brother André responsible for the apparent lack of leadership in the spiritual life. In his meetings with Brother André, he emphasized the need for strong spiritual leadership whereby every superior should model the ideals of the Rule. He called Brother André to task for the double standards that had been allowed to develop. He pointed out that the provincial and directors enjoyed special privileges not accorded to all the brothers. Along these lines, he questioned Brother André about many complaints made by a few individuals: his use of a private car, frequent visits to families, playing golf too often, two trips by car to visit his family in Canada, and excessive traveling. For Brother André, Brother Jules had turned the traditional canonical visitation into an inquisition far worse even than that of 1959 by Brother Alexis, which had prompted Brother André to write a letter of resignation as provincial.

Changing Attitudes

Perhaps Brother André's idealistic spirit was somewhat dampened after the visitation, but he continued to lead the province as he always had. Nevertheless, the brothers found him more remote from them. Often the brothers did not know his whereabouts, and that disturbed them and sowed seeds of distrust. In his circulars to the brothers, he continued to emphasize, as he always had, the need for a good religious spirit. He spoke in very practical terms about the need to maintain a spirit of fraternal charity, to eliminate griping, belittling sarcasm, and rumors all of which he hated. *"It is unfortunate,"* he wrote, *"that some of our religious houses have self-appointed critics."* (March 25, 1963) He had grown very sensitive to the criticism of his brothers, and he readily came to the defense of any brother subjected to uncharitable comments.

The optimistic mood of the country was changing, and this change was affecting the lives of the brothers. A spirit of cynicism was beginning to be felt throughout the country. Even the dynamic president, John F. Kennedy, felt the change. A passage from the speech that he was to deliver at the Dallas Trade Mart the day he was shot in 1963, sums up this attitude: *"There will always be dissident voices heard in the land, expressing opposition without alternatives, finding fault but never favor, perceiving gloom on every side and seeking influence without responsibility."*

Challenges Ahead

Right up to the very end of his term, Brother André emphasized the need for every brother to recruit: *"Humanly speaking you have many reasons to be discouraged. Perhaps in the school where you are now teaching very few boys have joined our ranks. You might be tempted to complain, `There are no vocations here.'"* Regarding recruiting, the provincial chapter held in New Orleans in July 1964 resolved that less emphasis be put on grammar grades and more on high school students, especially seniors, and college men.

Other chapter decisions urged that the director of studies work full-time in that role, that principals be freed from teaching classes, that every school have certified guidance personnel including at least one full-time guidance counselor, and that the province not open any new schools in the near future but strive to improve the professionalism in those it presently conducted. The chapter elected Brothers Roland Smith and Hubert Bonnette as delegates to accompany Brother André to the general chapter in September of 1964.

At the general chapter, Brother Jules Ledoux was elected the new superior general for a six-year term, and Brother Alexis Klee of the New Orleans Province was re-elected to the general council. Shortly after the general chapter, Brother André wrote to the province that at its meeting of November 3, 1964, the general council named Brother Hubert Bonnette provincial superior for three years. Brothers Roland Smith, Marcel Riviere, and Lee Barker were renamed to the provincial council, and Gaspar Rodrigue, principal and director in Houma, was named fourth councilor. In concluding his 81st and last circular as provincial, Brother André commented that it was *"the happiest I have ever written."*

Thirty years later, in March of 1994, Brother Bernard Couvillion, provincial, interviewed Father Joffre Robichaud, the former Brother André, who after 38 years as a brother had left the Institute in 1972 to become a priest in the archdiocese of Mobile. With a certain nostalgia, Father Joffre, who at the age of 76 was happily serving as pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Mon Luis Isle near Coden, Alabama, looked back on his 38 years with the brothers: *"I think I've enjoyed every minute of my life as a brother. And I think I always did what I was supposed to do. And I enjoyed doing it."* Whatever difficulties he may have encountered as provincial had faded away long ago, and he recalled only happy memories: *"I have never seen a better group of men anywhere than the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Just their spirit, their spirit of obedience, the happy spirit. . . . It was really a pleasure*

working with them. These men had the spirit of humility, the spirit of obedience, and the spirit of working as a group."

In a letter written to the provincial after the interview cited above and just a few months before his death on August 21, 1994, Father Joffre recalled that his term as provincial expired in 1964 on the eve of the changes in religious life called for by Vatican II. He pointed out how fortunate the brothers were that Brother Jules LeDoux was named superior general and Brother Hubert Bonnette provincial: *"Brother Jules was a man of vision, a community man, and an ideal leader of the Institute during the period of change. I am also grateful that Brother Hubert was named provincial to succeed me. He was a man of vision like the Superior General. Hubert was a kind and smiling man, a provincial with a heart. He had a tough job to do to keep community links with the past while searching for the needs of the future. Old customs die hard among old timers. And the future was so nebulous and dreamlike. I was the happiest monk in the world when he succeeded me."* (Letter, March 18, 1994)

CHAPTER 6

BROTHER HUBERT

(1964-1970)

Brother Hubert Bonnette, the 13th provincial of the New Orleans Province, was the last one to be appointed by the general council before elections were introduced. At the time of his nomination on November 3, 1964, Brother Hubert had had very little experience in administration three years as director and principal in Thibodaux from 1961-64. It was there during the 1962 canonical visitation that he had very favorably impressed Brother Jules LeDoux whom the general chapter of 1964 elected superior general. Brother Hubert had barely begun work as director-principal of Catholic High in Baton Rouge when he left in September 1964 for the general chapter in Rome. Brother Hubert was gifted, young, and energetic, but since he had little administrative experience and had not even served on the provincial council, no one thought of him in terms of provincial except the newly elected superior general.

Brothers were surprised indeed when Brother Hubert was announced as provincial. Some even thought that Brother André was joking when he introduced him as the new provincial one night at the supper table in New Orleans. Their laughter hurt Brother Hubert, but actually no one was more surprised than he himself. In his first circular to the brothers, he wrote: *"I'm confused. If the news concerning the new provincial and council was a shock to you, imagine what it was to me."* (Provincial Circular, November 11, 1964) In same the circular, Brother Hubert thanked Brother André for all that he had done for the province, especially for *"his consideration, kindness, and charity for each Brother."*

Brother Hubert's council consisted of Brothers Roland Smith, principal of Cor Jesu in New Orleans; Marcel Riviere, director and master of scholastics at Spring Hill; Lee Barker, director-principal of St. Aloysius in New Orleans; and Gaspar Rodrigue director-principal of St. Francis de Sales

in Houma. The council appointed Brother Donnan Berry to replace Brother Hubert as principal-director in Baton Rouge and Brother André to take Brother Donnan's place as a teacher at McGill in Mobile.

Open Communication

During his first round of visits in November, Brother Hubert often had to ask the local superior to read a talk he prepared for the brothers. He felt so uncomfortable and inadequate as provincial that he would get overcome with emotion and be unable to get through it. His talk set a tone of dialogue and teamwork: *"I never was able to work alone. I have to talk to others; I have to get advice. Now, more than ever, I need advice; if I do not ask, it is because I do not know about what I should ask. I do not feel capable of doing the job, but I do think that all of us can. In fact, I think the only thing I have working for me is that I know so little that I am willing to listen. But if your ideas are not implemented, do not think that they were not appreciated. It is by talking and exchanging ideas that we will continue to move forward spiritually and academically."*

His emphasis on positive criticism, discussion before decision-making, and shared responsibility were new concepts that characterized Brother Hubert's administration. His efforts at prompt and open communication were aimed at sharing information and ending the wall of silence that often surrounded important decisions touching the brothers' lives and which fed the rumor mills. He often wrote to the brothers the day after provincial council meetings to share important decisions. The council now met much more frequently than previous councils. Before the province was divided and travel to meetings took longer and cost more, the council usually met only three or four times annually, at Christmas, Easter, and during the summer retreats. Brother Hubert began to call council meetings whenever he felt that there were enough items of business to justify them or whenever there was a major issue he wanted to discuss with the council.

Professional Excellence

In his talk to the brothers during his first visitation, Brother Hubert outlined what would be the province goals for the next three years. They centered upon the recent provincial chapter's concern about professional excellence. He emphasized that all brothers should use the syllabuses produced by the various subject committees since they were the best on the

market, and he encouraged brothers to attend educational meetings and conventions whenever possible.

The provincial council took concrete steps to achieve the goal of increased professionalism. It extended the period of studies at the scholasticate from three to four years and put a definite stop to the practice of taking scholastics out of studies early. In the past when a principal needed a teacher, he contacted the provincial, who was expected to find a brother. Now Brother Hubert simply responded, *"Hire a layman."* Also in 1964 the provincial council gave permission for three brothers to begin full-time studies for doctoral degrees. Brother Louis Cavell pursued a doctorate in linguistics at Catholic University while two younger brothers, Brothers Neal Golden and Anthony DuRapau, attended LSU in Baton Rouge in preparation for doctoral work. Further, the council permitted Brother Clement Cosgrove, who had earlier earned a doctoral degree in education, to teach full-time at Loyola University in New Orleans. He was the second brother of the province to teach on the college level. Brother Claver Thomas, the first, was an associate professor at Spring Hill College.

In addition to allowing three to five brothers full-time studies annually, Brother Hubert gave permission to any brother who asked to attend summer school. Besides the 39 scholastics at Spring Hill College, more than 65 other brothers attended summer school according to the *Annuaire* of 1964-65. With the help of government grants, they went everywhere, not just to a few selected universities. A listing from the *Annuaire* of 1965-66 illustrates the point well:

Brother	Subject	University
Gordian Udinsky	Oceanography	Washington, Seattle, WA
Jerome Lepre	American History	Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
Fidelis Bragg	Biology	Loretto Heights, Loretto, CO
Neal Golden	Mathematics	Louisiana State, Baton Rouge,LA
Canisius Schell	Remedial Reading	Western Reserve, Cleveland, OH
Marion McCarley	French	Oakland, Rochester, MN
Ronald Michelli	Chemistry	Beaver College, Glensdale, PA
Paul Montero	Guidance	Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL
Raymond Ruffino	Chemistry	Louisiana State, Baton Rouge,LA
Vincent Bono	Mathematics	Stanford University, Palo Alto,CA

This was quite a change from back in 1948 when Brother Gilbert had to get special permission from Archbishop Joseph Rummel to allow a brother to attend summer classes at LSU since it was not a Catholic university.

By this time Brother Felician was working full-time as the province's director of studies. Besides organizing an annual Teachers' Institute, he was asked by Brother Hubert to visit every classroom in the province, to supervise teachers, and to hold a personal interview with each teacher.

Also between 1964 and 1967, the role of principal was gradually separated from that of local director in order to free the principals so that they too would have time to supervise teachers and attend to professional responsibilities. The change also allowed the director to devote more attention to his local community. The aftermath of the Second Vatican Council required that local superiors expend more energy organizing community meetings which focused on changes in the Church and the renewal of religious life.

Change to Civil Names

One of the decisions of the 1964 General Chapter which symbolically marked the beginning of the many and vast changes following in the wake of Vatican II was that *"With the permission of the general council, the provincial council may authorize the brothers to keep their religious name, or to bear their religious name followed by their family name, or just to have the family name alone."* Reasons given at the chapter for such a change were pragmatic ones concerning the confusion caused by different names in Church and civil registers and on official documents.

Much more so, however, the emphasis on the baptismal name was to mark a re-focusing of the Church on the gifts of baptism and of the universal call to holiness of lay Christians. It marked a change in attitude: in becoming a religious, a person no longer withdrew from the world. Rather, a new emphasis was given to the apostolate in the sense of going out into the world. It marked a change from a monastic style of religious life to one that was more apostolic. In February of 1965, Brother Hubert informed the brothers that the general council had approved the province's request and that they were free to return to their baptismal names if they wished. Many chose to use their family names, thus ending the confusion and embarrassment they sometimes experienced when filling out forms and asking a clerk, *"Do you want my name or my brother's name?"* Of course the inevitable reply from clerks was, *"Why would I want your brother's name? You're the one filling out the form!"* This change signaled many more changes that were to come following Vatican II.

Closing the Orphanages

Brother Hubert's term was characterized by many difficult decisions. Some of the most difficult and controversial centered around the withdrawal from several schools, including two orphanages. For several compelling reasons, the provincial council decided to close the orphanage in Natchez in 1966. Most of the boys at D'Evereux Hall were in the lower elementary grades, and the province lacked personnel to work with their age group. Diocesan authorities had adopted new trends in child-care, placing as many boys as possible in foster homes. Of the 39 boys who stayed some time with the brothers during their last two years in Natchez, more than one-fourth were placed in such homes.

The closing of D'Evereux Hall left the province with only one orphanage, Catholic Boys' Home (CBH) in Mobile, formerly St. Vincent's Asylum, where the brothers first started their work in the United States in 1847. But CBH, too, was soon to close. Because of the very sensitive nature of this decision and the strong feelings of so many brothers, the council decided to bring the matter to the 1968 Provincial Chapter, which in turn authorized the provincial council to decide the matter. On April 10, 1970, the provincial council unanimously agreed that the brothers would withdraw from CBH. Minutes from the council's meeting which were forwarded to the superior general in Rome reported: *"We do not have men qualified to do this type of work. At one time it was doubtful, but the boys placed in the Home are now, in many instances, court cases and are so maladjusted that special education and training are needed to work with them."*

Decisions to close the orphanages were difficult for the council to make. They were even more difficult for a good number of brothers to accept not just for those brothers who without special training had worked with the orphans for 20 or 30 years, but also for other brothers who had never worked at the orphanages but who saw them as the brothers' special contribution to working with the poor. Some bitterness resulted from these decisions, and some brothers for years to come would say that the province had abandoned the poor and had given up the very work for which it existed. Perhaps more than anything else the closing of the orphanages brought into sharp focus the vast changes taking place not just in the Church and religious life, but in society as well.

Signs of the Times

The times were changing very quickly, and brothers were forced to change with them. Not only were there sweeping changes in religious life, but also there were vast changes in the schools. Innovations in the schools were handled in a professional manner and usually were more readily accepted by the brothers. For example, the brothers' schools racially integrated with little difficulty. And the gradual shift from brothers teaching in all-boys' schools to co-institutional schools and then to coeducational schools was hardly noticed. The hardest change for the brothers in the schools was the decreasing number of brothers available and the consequent ramifications. During the mid-'60s, however, many brothers simply did not want to believe that the decline would continue.

Those who resisted inevitable changes, for whatever – reasons personal, religious, or social – were bound to suffer. Probably no one suffered more than Brother Hubert, not because he resisted change, but because as provincial at the time he was necessarily the active agent of many changes. His sensitive nature caused him to suffer whenever another brother suffered. He did not want to hurt anyone, but he knew that many were hurting, and he could not help them. He saw the need to prepare the province for a future that few other brothers at that time could even imagine or were even willing to talk about. The facts of decline were evident, but many brothers denied them. In spite of criticism, Brother Hubert courageously led the province along the path of renewal.

Seeking Financial Stability

Brother Hubert undertook the task of studying the financial needs of the province and negotiating new contracts with all diocesan authorities where the brothers worked. He had done all of his homework to show these authorities that the brothers needed better stipends if they were to continue to work in diocesan schools. He consulted Archbishop John Cody of New Orleans and found him very understanding. When Brother Hubert confided that he was a little shy approaching bishops to ask for more money, the archbishop advised him, *"If they can't pay what you need, send your brothers to me."* Thus encouraged, Brother Hubert began visiting the various bishops and pastors in 1965, sharing with them in writing the financial situation of the province and pointing out that brothers needed to earn a minimum of $2,633.51 annually. He submitted a detailed study showing that the cost of living per brother amounted

to $118.61 per month for food, clothes, medicines, and other essentials. Besides $1,067.49 to pay the actual cost of living for nine months of the school year, the annual minimum included $1,566.02 to cover the summer months and some of the charges for brothers' retreats, education, and other province expenses such as insurance and health care.

Withdrawal from Three Schools

During Brother Hubert's two terms of office, the province withdrew from three schools, not counting the two orphanages. After repeated negotiations with diocesan authorities in Alexandria, the provincial council finally decided on December 18, 1965, to withdraw the four brothers from Menard at the end of the 1966-67 school term. Also, the provincial council was forced to withdraw the brothers from two other schools at the end of the 1967-68 school year: Ascension Catholic in Donaldsonville and St. Aloysius in Vicksburg. These were painful decisions to make, but they were considered necessary for financial reasons and lack of personnel due to sickness, death, and departures. Because of a shortage of manpower, the province could no longer afford to subsidize schools by allowing brothers to work in them for less than what it cost them to live. The brothers had worked in Donaldsonville for 82 years, but in 1968 the four brothers there were withdrawn, as were the four brothers in Vicksburg, where the brothers had worked for 90 years.

Consolidation of St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu

A major topic of concern during Brother Hubert's administration was what to do about St. Aloysius in New Orleans. The school was terribly overcrowded, in poor physical condition, and in a neighborhood that was not conducive to the school's further development. On June 17, 1966, the provincial council discussed a proposed contract to be made with New Orleans Archbishop Philip Hannan, who had replaced Archbishop John Cody in 1965. After suggesting a few minor changes, the archbishop gave his consent to the contract which called for the archdiocese to deed to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart a new boys' high school to be erected on a 17-acre tract of land which the archdiocese owned in Harahan just outside of New Orleans.

For several reasons, the contract, which would have solved the problem for Brother Hubert, did not materialize. Many parents at St. Aloysius heard about the plan prematurely and reacted strongly against it. And the

archdiocese, then in financial difficulties, was unable to commit itself to a definite building schedule. In February of 1967 the contract was annulled, and the provincial council began studying other options, one of which was to consolidate St. Aloysius with Cor Jesu. Through an extensive consultative process, Brother Hubert involved all the brothers in the province before the provincial council decided on October 7, 1967, to consolidate St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu for the good of both schools. To accommodate the combined student bodies, the council planned to do significant construction at Cor Jesu. It called upon Brother Mark Thornton to coordinate the consolidation. This was a happy choice, one that was well received by the brothers both at St. Aloysius and at Cor Jesu.

After several years of meetings, discussions, dialogues, and negotiations, some of which were very emotional and even heated, the province had finally decided upon a clear course of action for the brothers' schools in New Orleans. In a January 28, 1968, letter to the parents in New Orleans, Brother Hubert announced the move of St. Aloysius from Rampart and Esplanade to a new and enlarged school to open in September of 1969 at the site of Cor Jesu on Elysian Fields Avenue.

Time of Transition

The changes in the brothers' schools were happening at the same time that even greater changes were being made in their community living. From November 1966 to February 1967, Brother Alexis Klee, assistant general, made another canonical visitation of the province. In a letter appended to his report to Brother Jules Ledoux, superior general, he wrote him: *"I am afraid that the picture I make to you of the province will not be very clear as I, myself, am not sure that it is clear to me. On the one hand, it was evident that there exists an excellent spirit among the Brothers of the province as a whole. At the same time, there are in certain quarters some discontent, especially among the older men who feel that the young men have a greater influence while they are mostly neglected."*

Brother Alexis attributed the excellent spirit in the province to Brother Hubert's *"spirit and his sharing with the Brothers his plans and projects, keeping them informed of the condition of the province and their part in its development. He is a very strong believer in the `dialogue' between superiors and inferiors and engages in it quite frequently."* (Visitation Report, p. 27) Several of the older men in the province thought that Brother Hubert had a tendency to side with younger members on important issues.

Perhaps this was true. The younger members by their training were better prepared for dialogue and were much more attuned to the renewal of religious life being urged by Vatican II. Conflicts and polarization developed between old and young, often labeled, respectively, as conservative and liberal. Feelings of alienation, confusion, anger, and even jealousy were often involved. One older brother, Brother Luke Tressel, very honestly lamented to a younger brother, *"The trouble today is that you younger guys are doing what we older men wanted to do when we were young, but we weren't allowed to."*

The visitation of the province in 1967 must have been painful in many ways for Brother Alexis, who was 69 years old and who had been in Rome for 15 years. The province was quite different from what it was when he had left it in 1952. He had spent a good part of his life encouraging brothers to keep the Rule, and now even the Rule itself was being changed. When young brothers eager for change asked him about the new Rule, he simply told them to keep the old one.

So, this transitional time was difficult for Brother Alexis, who experienced what many of the older brothers were going through. The old formulas were no longer suitable, but new ones had not yet been devised. This situation proved especially true during the regular three-year canonical visitation. For each community he visited, Brother Alexis had to complete a printed evaluation form in French for the superior general. Little had changed in these forms during the 15 years that Brother Alexis made visitations. The first part consisted of a list of 60 to 80 items concerning the director, the community, and the school, to be evaluated on a scale from zero to five. These items touched upon such things as punctuality, silence at breakfast, use of the telephone, hour of rising, hour of retiring, recitation of the rosary, vocal prayers, attendance at sports events and movies, and the use of radio and television. Under *Varia* were another 10 to 20 topics.

Throughout the evaluation, holiness continued to be equated with religious discipline. For example, the canonical report in 1967 still listed the names of brothers who smoked. Thus, in Brother Alexis's report there were statements such as the following: *"Sixty percent of the Brothers of the Province do not smoke. This is two percent less than in 1959. Of those who smoke there is practically no control over how much they use although the Customary (Handbook of Customs known today as the Province Directory) provides for two cartons per month. In many houses, the cigarettes are left in a public place and the Brothers help themselves as they wish. Brother*

Provincial has given permission to four temporary professed to use tobacco." (Report, p. 20)

Other new developments in the province caused Brother Alexis a bit of uneasiness. He questioned, for example, the use of computers in light of their expense. He felt that too many young brothers attended non-Catholic universities where their vocation might be jeopardized. The province spent too much money, he thought, sending brothers to far-away conventions. He disapproved of the fact that the provincial had given brothers permission to talk during breakfast. And he was shocked to find out that Brother Hubert took flying lessons.

Brother Alexis reported that *"during the past three years the province has been fortunate in not losing many Brothers, a total of twelve which gives the low average of four a year."* At the time of Brother Alexis's visit in early 1967, the personnel of the province consisted of 180 professed brothers. They were engaged as follows:

Administration	20
Teaching or prefecting	113
Manual work	11
Sick or retired	9
Full-time studies	4
Scholastics at Spring Hill	23
Total brothers in the province	180

In addition to the professed brothers, 47 of whom were temporary professed, the province counted only 16 young men in initial formation: two novices at Belvidere, eight postulants at Spring Hill, and six candidates at the juniorate in Bay St. Louis. Recruiting had slumped. Brother Alexis, as well as a number of brothers in the province, had difficulty accepting the provincial chapter's decision to place more emphasis on recruiting older candidates even though masters of formation at the time were not only in favor of recruiting older candidates, but they were also advocating abandonment of high school juniorates.

Professional Progress Continues

Brother Alexis was very favorably impressed by a heightened professional attitude among the brothers, both old and young alike. Brother Hubert had encouraged advanced studies in nearly all subjects, and many

brothers had become experts in their fields. Brothers had begun to publish textbooks and articles in professional journals. The positive effects of having a full-time director of studies were evident. The annual province-sponsored Teachers' Institutes, begun in 1961, continued to address current trends in education. For example, the 1966 conference at the Jung Hotel in New Orleans featured Dr. Melvin Heller of Chicago's Loyola University, who spoke about "Flexible Scheduling and Independent Study" two ideas introduced along with team teaching into a number of the brothers' schools.

Various subject committees of brothers had moved beyond developing syllabuses to writing for professional publications, some of which were getting national acclaim. *The Math Forum*, for example, published by the Mathematics Committee, attracted the attention not only of teachers throughout the country but of textbook publishers as well. The province English Committee, under the leadership of Brother Collin Dugas, published *The English Corner*; and the Religion Committee, led by Brother Lawrence Tooley, published *Now*.

With changes happening so fast in the Church, the teaching of religion had become a real problem. So, in 1967 the brothers devoted their Teachers' Institute, again at the Jung Hotel, entirely to the teaching of religion. In preparation for the convention, they conducted a detailed study about their religion programs. This data-based study, effected by means of a questionnaire, involved students in schools throughout the province. More than 200,000 items of information were collected and analyzed by computer. Brothers then studied and discussed the results, using them to draw up guidelines to improve religion programs in all the schools.

Second Term Administration

The general council named Brother Hubert to a second term in November of 1967. Before doing so, however, for the first time in the history of the province, the general council requested the professed brothers, other than the scholastics, to suggest names for the provincial and four councilors. Following this consultation, Brothers Marcel Riviere and Lee Barker were reappointed second and third councilors, respectively; Brother Mark Thornton was named first councilor, replacing Brother Roland Smith; and Brother Felician Fourrier was named fourth councilor, replacing Brother Gaspar Rodrigue. All had served on previous councils.

Participation in Chapter Preparation

Two topics thoroughly discussed among the brothers at community meetings throughout 1967 were the revision of the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute and the extraordinary provincial and general chapters scheduled for 1968. These chapters would discuss the ongoing evolution in the Church and religious life brought about by Vatican II. The provincial council established six commissions in 1967 to study the constitutions. Thirty-nine brothers served on the following six committees: Preamble, Spiritual Life, Religious Life, Apostolate, Formation, and Government. These various committees of brothers met frequently and prepared draft statements which were then distributed and discussed in every local community.

Brother Hubert encouraged brothers to study key documents such as *Perfectae Caritatis* and *Lumen Gentium* in preparation for such dialogue. Also he frequently published lists of books and tapes to be purchased to update the brothers' spiritual-reading libraries. To involve the younger members of the community, several temporary-professed brothers, not eligible to be chapter delegates, were named to the preparatory committees for the provincial chapter scheduled to take place in Bay St. Louis in July of 1968.

1968 Chapter: Historic Turning Point

The 1968 Provincial Chapter was an historic one in many ways. Twenty delegates were elected at-large rather than by groupings of houses; another 20, including all local directors, attended by right of office. Brother Martin Hernandez at age 64 was the oldest delegate; and Brother Paul Montero, attending as a third alternate, was the youngest at 31. Usually provincial chapters lasted two or three days, but the special chapter of 1968 lasted 24, from July 3-26. Never before had a chapter been so well prepared by special coordinating committees. Every brother had been invited to complete a 58-item questionnaire concerning important issues of community life, government, the vows, and the apostolate.

All chapter sessions were conducted according to Robert's *Rules of Order*, and only delegates were allowed to attend. Non-delegates were permitted, however, to speak to the committees of the chapter. Thus, a panel of three scholastics addressed the Government Commission on the latest theological and philosophical principles regarding authority, responsibility, and subsidiarity in religious life. For the first time, voting was done by an electric voting machine which Brother Felician constructed. It was also the

first chapter at which members were not bound to secrecy until Rome had approved and promulgated the results. In fact, the chapter published its proceedings as the sessions progressed.

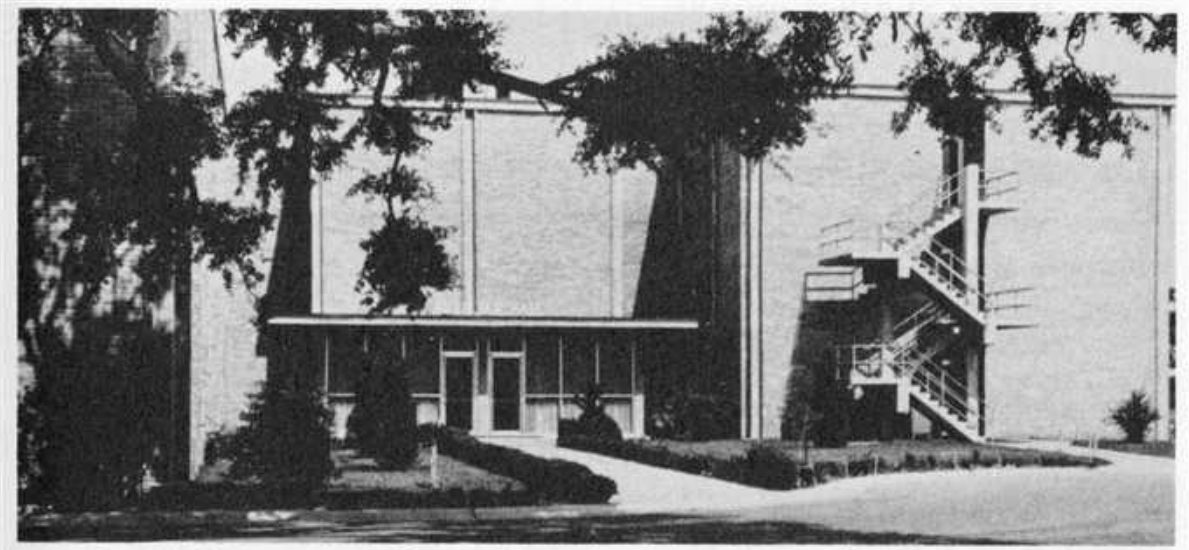
The provincial chapter of 1968 truly marked a turning point in the history of the province. Not only was it a strong affirmation of recent changes, but it also called for much more sweeping ones. One of the most controversial of its decisions was to accept candidates only after high school, which meant closing the juniorate. Other resolutions touched on the brothers' lifestyle. Brothers were allowed to welcome guests at their community meals. Brothers preferring to teach in a black suit were allowed to do so, and the wearing of the cassock became optional. Brothers were granted two weeks each summer to visit their families. They would be given anniversary trips after 50 and 25 years of profession. And brothers would be permitted to participate much more actively than ever before in Church and civic organizations.

The special chapter of 1968 established the province Recruiting and Formation Committee and proposed a combined novitiate with New York and New England, to be located in New England or in New Orleans. The chapter also mandated that a Civil Rights Committee be established to help schools achieve three major goals: a greater degree of racial integration of student bodies and faculties; more scholarships for minority students; and a course of studies in African-American culture. This chapter also asked the provincial council to begin studying some type of retirement fund and insurance program for the lay personnel in the brothers' schools.

In his report to the delegates, Brother Hubert presented the stark reality, showing how the decline in vocations in North America and Europe hit home. From 1964 to 1968 the number of candidates had dropped from 26 to one; novices from 11 to two; and temporary professed from 41 to 34. He told the delegates that religious life was being reorganized and that for many the process would be confusing and difficult to cope with: *"The state of apostolic religious life as we know it will break down. It will become very small. New celibate communities which place the emphasis on the person, rather than the institution, will be established. They will be person-centered communities of service, rather than structure-centered communities. . . . We've got to find styles of community life which enable people to experience human relationships based on a real sharing of life and experience, and not on external conformity to impersonal practices."*

End of an Era

On July 8, 1968, just after the special chapter got underway, as if to mark the end of an era, Brother Aurelian Piton died at Bay St. Louis. It was the first chapter in the history of the province at which no Frenchman was a delegate, not even by right of office. "*Chief*," as Brother Aurelian was affectionately called, was the last survivor of the 163 Frenchmen who had worked in the United States Province, 78 of whom died in this country and were buried here. Brother Aurelian had arrived in Metuchen as a novice in 1903 with Brother Albertinus, and had spent more than 65 years at the Bay. The dormitory building there, completed in 1966, was named Aurelian Hall in his honor, much to his embarrassment, as a tribute to the love and affection



Aurelian Hall constructed in 1966 at St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis

that the brothers had for him. To mark the occasion of his death, Brother Fidelis Bragg, one of the chapter delegates, wrote *The Last Cedar* in testimony to him and the 252 other French brothers who left their country to plant the seeds of the Institute in North America.

THE LAST CEDAR

The wind of the Spirit, gently and imperceptibly
Placed those seeds upon this field.
How cold and unreceptive, at times, how hostile
Those seedlings felt the earth.
How little the soil sensed the good
These saplings would render.
Some became stunted, others choked.

Those surviving, grew full stout
Straight, tall and strong
Needed trees, which gave shade
To succor the floundering and weary.
Young, flexible and determined
These stalwarts ebbed the erosions
Of disbelief, indifference and injustice.
Many a life's pilgrim
Found refreshment and strength
While passing beneath their branches.
In time, the soil nurtured new seedlings.
With still more time the cedars thinned
And gave space to their progeny.
Evolution effected a new variety a new breed.
Life and Time biased toward the progeny
Slowly forgot the progenitors.
Today, the last cedar fell.
But, what a forest!

General Chapter of 1968

The provincial chapter of 1968 elected Brothers Mark Thornton and Marcel Riviere to accompany Brother Hubert to the extraordinary general chapter due to begin in Rome on October 29, 1968. To guide them on the pending question of ordination, the provincial chapter members voted 29-6-0 in favor of *"allowing some Brothers of the Sacred Heart to become priests in our Institute, provided that the lay character of our Institute remain unchanged."* This question of ordination was one of the major issues facing the general chapter in 1968. According to Brother Jules Ledoux, superior general, in the promulgation of the acts of the 28th General Chapter, *"The question of the priesthood was one of the moments both most solemn and the gravest of our chapter, where the worth of principles and traditions confronted the imperatives of situations and apostolic opening."* The general chapter voted 44-2-11 to accept ordination in the Institute within the limits of *Perfectae Caritatis. (Acts of 28th Chapter, p. 47, #65)* The chapter specified that at a second session to be scheduled later, it would study specific legislation and decide what to include in the revised Rules and Constitutions regarding ordination.

In other action, the special general chapter of 1968 authorized each province *"to make experiments in the manner of living, of praying, of working and of governing."* It also granted permission *ad experimentum* for each province to make its own legislation concerning a wide variety of topics. Provinces were given the right to name directors, masters of formation, provincial treasurers, and provincial secretaries without prior approval of the general council. Provinces were allowed to adopt *ad experimentum* the manner of choosing their provincial and council. And on the local level, each community became responsible for its own internal organization.

Special Chapters Continue

On March 8-9, 1969, the provincial chapter, composed of the same 1968 delegates met at Cor Jesu in New Orleans to determine how the province would implement changes mandated by the general chapter in 1968. Most of the work had already been done by preparatory committees, so the chapter deliberations progressed rapidly. Chapter members determined that the provincial and council of the New Orleans Province would be elected and that the change of administration would take place on August 15 instead of in November, an awkward time in view of the school year.

A second session of the 28th General Chapter took place in Rome from January 9 to March 13 of 1970, also with the same delegates as the first session. Its work was to produce a revised copy of the Rules and Constitutions *ad experimentum,* as called for by the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae,* 3:6, one of the major documents of Vatican II on renewal of religious life. The first session of the general chapter had established a permanent commission to prepare a working text based upon suggestions of provincial and regional chapters. Brother Marcel Riviere had returned to Rome in May of 1969 to serve on this committee. The committee's careful work greatly facilitated the task of the second session. Also, so that the delegates would not have to return to Rome for election of a new administration seven months later, Brother Jules Ledoux resigned as superior general at that session. On March 11, 1970, the chapter elected Brother Maurice Ratte as the new superior. Brother Marcel was elected the second of six assistants general, replacing Brother Alexis Klee, who had served for 18 years.

In April of 1970 the province had a brief, but very important, two-day chapter in New Orleans to finish implementing the acts of the extraordinary general chapter and to assure that its legislation was in accord with that of the Institute. This chapter approved a new formation program presented by the

Recruiting and Formation Committee under the leadership of Brother Armand Little. The initial formation program included three phases: a prenovitiate program for candidates who would live in various houses of the province, a two-year novitiate program, and a postnovititate program.

Also at this special provincial chapter of 1970, the 40 delegates voted 27-13, thus achieving the two-thirds majority required, to allow some of the brothers in the New Orleans Province *"to become priests in keeping with items #517-524C of the provisional text of the Constitutions as adopted by the General Chapter of 1970."* Within a few years, the province would have several ordained brothers to assure that local communities had access to meaningful liturgical celebrations, especially in areas where priests were not readily available.

Ordained Brothers

Immediately after the chapter's approval of ordination, Father Geoffrey Kerwin, a former Brother of the Sacred Heart for many years who had left in order to be ordained, petitioned to re-enter the community. The brothers in Africa where Brother Geoffrey had been working unanimously agreed, and in September of 1970 the Sacred Congregation of Religious granted permission for him to be readmitted without remaking a novitiate or a period of temporary vows. So Brother Geoffrey Kerwin was the province's first ordained brother. He continued to work in Uganda until 1973, when he returned to the province after 23 years in Africa. In May of 1970, the provincial council asked permission from Rome for Brother Farrel Lorio, who had been working on a doctorate in theology at Notre Dame in Indiana, to begin studies for ordination.

In keeping with the guidelines of the general chapter, the provincial council conducted an analysis of the needs of the province regarding ordination. *"Based on both the need for a personalized meaningful liturgy in the local communities and the need that would be filled by a Brother-Priest in the school proper, especially in the capacity of moral counseling,"* the provincial council asked the general council for four ordained brothers to serve the brothers' schools in New Orleans, Mobile, Baton Rouge, and Dallas. (Provincial Council Minutes, July 2, 1970)

New Rule and Prayer Forms

The new Rule, which incorporated the Constitutions, was published in a spiral-bound booklet which accentuated the fact that it was provisional until the next general chapter in 1976. This Rule replaced the familiar little black Rule book which was printed in 1927. This 1927 edition had not been reprinted in English after some Rule changes were made in 1946 since they were considered minor. While updating the Rule in the late '60s was a dramatic event for all brothers in the Institute, it was even more so for English-speaking brothers because they had not experienced an earlier change in the Rule book as had brothers who spoke French or Spanish.

One significant change in the new Rule involved forms of communal prayer. The Manual of Piety used since 1877 had been replaced in 1963 by a revised Little Office of the Sacred Heart modeled on the breviary and printed in Latin with English on facing pages. General chapters since 1946 had allowed brothers to pray the Little Office of the Sacred Heart from time to time in the vernacular, rather than in Latin. And the general chapters of 1958 and 1964 had permitted provinces to substitute hours of the Divine Office in place of the Little Office of the Sacred Heart. Because the New Orleans Province had not taken advantage of these opportunities to adapt its community prayers, brothers later found the Divine Office all the more difficult to accept after the 1968 General Chapter adopted its usage. But since that same chapter allowed each local community discretion to decide its own prayers by way of experimentation, few houses in the province prayed the Divine Office. Also during the late '60s and early '70s, many time-honored devotions such as the rosary, the Way of the Cross, and novenas to the Sacred Heart disappeared in most houses.

While Brother Hubert was always very sensitive to feelings of the brothers, he did not let his sensitivity or the feelings of discomfort with change experienced by some brothers interfere with the call of the Church to update religious life and the liturgy. Brother Hubert understood well the vision of Vatican II, and he communicated frequently with the brothers, trying to explain the reasons for various changes. He tried to help brothers maintain a balanced perspective, not to take minor things too seriously nor to confuse accidentals with the essentials. And he often tried to ease tensions with humor. The following excerpt from one of his circulars shows his use of humor and his sensitivity to what some were feeling:

The Updated Church

(A Conservative's Lament)

Latin's gone
Peace is too
Singin' and shoutin'
From every pew.
Altar's turned round
Priest is too
Commentator's yellin'
Page twenty-two!
Communion rail's goin'
Stand up straight
Kneelin' suddenly
Went outa' date.

Rosary's out
Psalms are in
Hardly ever hear
A word against sin.
Padre's looking puzzled
Doesn't know his part
Used to know the whole
Deal in Latin by heart.
I hope all changes
Are just about done
That they won't drop
Bingo before I've won!

Brother Hubert was well aware that changes in the way the brothers prayed in community were difficult for some brothers to accept. He had tried to prepare them for the change by centering all of the province retreats in 1967 on the new liturgy. In related efforts, the province sponsored a two-day workshop on religious life in New Orleans in 1967. As its main speaker, the Rev. Adrian Van Kaam, CSSp, renowned spiritual writer and founder of the Institute of Formative Spirituality at Duquesne University, addressed the brothers. In August of 1968 Brothers Joseph Ruffino and Vincent Bono organized a three-day Liturgical Conference for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson. All brothers in the province were invited to the program hosted by St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis.

Financing Province Institutions

Financial problems continued to vex the provincial and his council. The council struggled to secure enough collateral in order to borrow for the construction at Brother Martin High School, the name the provincial chapter chose for the consolidated school in New Orleans. The province debt stood at $1.45 million. In addition to the $1.12 million needed for the construction at the school, which did not include furnishings, the provincial council needed to

find money to purchase necessary housing for the brothers. Thus, in June of 1969 the council issued bonds, and the province debt rose to $2,152,000, with a 6-percent average interest rate, rendering an annual debt service of $220,000.

Then to make matters worse, Hurricane Camille inflicted damage of more than $1 million to St. Stanislaus College in August 1969. In November 1969, Brother Pierre St. Pierre, president of St. Stanislaus, presented the provincial council a long-range building plan for a new school complex. The council agreed that the old school was beyond repair and began searching for sufficient funds to build. In December, the province council took advantage of special loans offered to help small businesses after the hurricane disaster. After the province's initial application was rejected because of its large debt service, the council re-submitted its request in the name of St. Stanislaus College, which was incorporated. The province thus secured from the Small Business Administration a $500,000 loan at a rate of only 3-percent interest for 30 years. Brothers throughout the province reviewed the plans for the new school building and offered comments. Phase one, due for completion in September 1971, included administration and classroom areas at a cost of $1,295,660. The government loan covered $500,000 of this amount, and storm damage insurance provided $548,626. Phase two would include a student union area to be built when finances at the school became available.

Some of the financial pressure aggravated by Hurricane Camille was relieved in September of 1969 when the province sold the scholasticate at Spring Hill to St. Paul's Episcopal Day School for $615,000, of which $350,000 was paid immediately. Remittances from the various houses at that time totaled about $381,550, making the province debt manageable, but leaving the brothers with no possibility to start new projects or to reach out to the poor more than they were already doing. Some brothers found this fact discouraging and expressed sentiments of feeling trapped or tied to existing establishments. Such anti-institutional attitudes, quite prevalent in American society during the '70s, had their impact on the brothers.

Satellite Houses

Closing the brothers' residence at St. Aloysius created a housing shortage for the brothers in New Orleans. Rather than enlarging the faculty residence at 4601 Elysian Fields Avenue, the provincial council purchased four family residences for $136,305. These residences, called satellite houses, not only solved the housing problem, but also allowed for small-group community living, a change based on a provincial chapter decision

sanctioning experimentation. Each residence became an independent community and received a stipend of $2,500 per brother from the school. Each had its own budget and automobile. Cars from the former St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu communities were distributed by lot.

Thus, when Brother Martin High School began its first session in September of 1969, brothers lived in four residences in addition to the large faculty residence: 2150 Brutus Street, 4540 Elysian Fields Avenue, 4490 Painters Street on the corner of Lombard, and 1930 Robert E. Lee Boulevard. Older brothers were given first choice of residences, and most chose the big house next to the school on 4601 Elysian Fields Avenue. Brother Henry Gaither, a young brother who had lived there the previous year, was approached by Brother Hubert and told, *"Henry, you have a choice. You can remain here or you can move into one of the small residences."* When Brother Henry replied that he would prefer to remain where he was, Brother Hubert responded, *"Well, Henry, you just lost your choice."* Priority for space in the big house went to older men.

Civil Rights Committee

As a general rule, the brothers followed the leadership and recommendations of diocesan authorities in regard to racial integration. Thus, the brothers' schools in the South integrated very quietly and without fanfare or incident. Most of the schools administered by the brothers integrated during the 1964-65 and 1965-66 school years which was usually either just before or at the same time as the public schools in each area. The brothers carefully assured that their schools did not become havens for those fleeing desegregation in the public schools. The provincial chapter of 1970 challenged the schools which the brothers administered to continue the integration process *"at least to the degree comparable to the percentage of Negroes in the Catholic population from which our schools draw."* The chapter established a Civil Rights Committee and charged it to conduct surveys and publish their results to show the number of black students in each school and the amount of tuition assistance given to poor students.

The following chart compares results of the first survey taken by the brothers' committee in 1967 with those of 1970.

School	No. Students		No. Blacks		% Blacks	
	1967	1970	1967	1970	1967	1970
Catholic High Baton Rouge	472	440	19	18	4.0	4.1
E.D. White Thibodaux	356	426	32	19	8.9	4.5
McGill Mobile	866	775	32	107	3.7	13.8
Bishop Dunne Dallas	289	713	20	116	6.9	16.3
St. Stanislaus Bay St. Louis	471	512	32	39	6.8	7.6
Vandebilt Houma	610	695	47	28	7.7	4.0
Brother Martin* New Orleans	1410	1370	18	74	1.3	5.4
TOTAL	4474	4931	200	401	4.5	8.1

* 1967 numbers are for Cor Jesu and St. Aloysius combined

Studies by the Civil Rights Committee showed that the brothers' schools accepted almost 100 percent of the blacks who applied, but the committee further challenged school administrators to recruit black students more actively, even among the non-Catholic population. The committee's report showed also that, in 1970, the brothers' schools offered more than $73,600 in tuition reductions and scholarships to poor students, and a significant portion of that amount went to enable black students to attend their schools.

On May 16-17, 1970, the province Civil Rights Committee under the leadership of Brother Vincent Bono sponsored the first of several province-wide workshops to discuss practical aspects of the brothers' involvement in race issues. Brother Hubert contracted with Dr. Nathan Wright, a professor of urban affairs and chairman of African-American studies at State University of New

York, to address the brothers at this first workshop at Brother Martin High School. By this time not only were all of the student bodies of the brothers' schools fairly well integrated, but several of the faculties were as well. Through the committee's efforts, the curriculum of several schools included units on African-American studies and current topics touching on issues of prejudice and racism.

Coping With Exhaustion and Controversies

Little wonder, considering the pace of his activities during the past six years, that Brother Hubert's health began to fail. He suffered from recurring chest pains which were to bother him for years afterwards. On May 23, 1970, Brother Alfred Rodriguez, provincial secretary, informed the brothers that Brother Hubert was diagnosed by several doctors as being completely exhausted and in need of bed rest. He had burned himself out, but was not ready to admit it. By this time, the province had already elected his successor as provincial, and the end of his mandate was in sight. But Brother Hubert had not finished all that he wanted to accomplish. One of his councilors recalls him saying, *"I want everything to be in order when I leave office so that the next provincial will not have the problems I've had."*

There still remained a few major problems Brother Hubert wanted to settle before leaving office. One was the sale of the provincial house in Daphne, where he had been living since 1965 when the juniorate was moved to Bay St. Louis. On June 15, 1970, an agreement was signed to sell the house and grounds at Daphne to Bayside Academy, a nondenominational private school. To be able to sell the building as a school was a real financial plus for the province. But like so many decisions throughout Brother Hubert's administration, this one too became controversial. Bishop John L. May of Mobile expressed his misgivings at the brothers' selling to a private academy because of possible racial implications. Thus, before finalizing the deal, Brother Hubert consulted with a wide variety of people in leadership positions within the black community to get their advice. Almost all advised the council to sell with an insertion of a clause in the contract that the new school would not refuse applicants on the basis of race.

Another persistent problem for Brother Hubert was the former St. Aloysius school in New Orleans. Finally on July 2, 1970, the provincial council made the decision to demolish the school since it had become a hazard. But because of so much sentimental attachment to St. Aloysius by the

brothers and people in New Orleans, what should have been a routine administrative decision became a very emotional affair.

Never before in the history of the province had one provincial faced so many monumental and controversial decisions, decisions touching not just the brothers' schools but the meaning of their lives. By involving all the brothers in the province in the decision-making process through discussion and dialogue as well as consultation, Brother Hubert shared responsibility with them. And in many cases this shared responsibility caused brothers to feel all the more the pain that accompanied difficult decisions. Brothers were not accustomed to dealing with such difficulties, and some were uncomfortable as well with the new demands of personal responsibility that came with the renewal in religious life.

Brother Hubert was able to envision the future and make hard decisions, such as withdrawing from schools as he saw the numbers of brothers diminishing. He developed the necessary courage and self-confidence to confront bishops when the good of the province called for it. He modernized the province with his efficient and open management style. But none of his personal qualities of listening and empathy could relieve the hurt of so many brothers. They were simply overwhelmed by the turmoil within the Church and the tumultuous transitions and tensions in religious life. Most brothers found it especially difficult to accept the signs of death and dying in the province, symbolized by the closing of schools, orphanages, and even houses of formation.

What was happening in the province during the second half of the '60s was to some degree a reflection of what was happening in American society in general. It was the age of individualism, the *"I gotta be me"* generation. Self-fulfillment began to take priority over institutional commitments. It was a period of unrest, of the civil rights movement. In 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, and Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles. People were beginning to protest the war in Vietnam. It was a time of rebellion and revolution in society, a time of violent demonstrations and violent resistance. Authority was widely challenged. Society was unraveling, and people were divided on many issues. Divorce rates soared. The family disintegrated. And the brothers were not immune.

Brothers in the New Orleans Province felt the impact of living in such a turbulent society. Not only did such a climate not produce new vocations, but also dissatisfaction within religious life led many to leave it. There was polarization of young and old, conservatives and liberals. Not to be forgotten,

however, is the fact that even though Brother Hubert's term of office took place during such troubled times, many of the strong points of religious life as it is lived today in the New Orleans Province owe their origin to that very same period of upheaval and renewal.

CHAPTER 7

BROTHER MARK

(1970-1976)

No one was surprised when Brother Mark Thornton became the first provincial elected by the brothers in the province. He was well known as a very capable administrator with much experience as a local director and as a school principal. He had served on the councils of the three previous provincials. And even more important, given the time of his election, he had proved himself as a peacemaker during the controversial consolidation of St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu and as the first principal of Brother Martin High School. He offered the province stability in the wake of so many rapid and drastic changes that had taken place during the '60s.

Aside from Brother Lambert Fairfield, provincial from 1931-37, Brother Mark, 54 when he was elected, was the oldest brother to become provincial in the United States. In voting for him, the brothers viewed his age and experience as assets. Brother Mark took office August 15, 1970, more than five months after the announcement of his election. In the past, provincials took office immediately upon being named in November, often upsetting school administrations. The new system provided for a smoother transition and allowed adequate time to adjust province assignments. This August change proved especially helpful when Brother Mark, principal at Brother Martin High School, was elected provincial.

Election Process

First balloting for the new provincial began on December 31, 1969, according to a province election process permitted by the 1968 General Chapter, the first to allow elections. Every brother who had completed three years of profession was eligible to vote and received a ballot listing all those

eligible to be elected perpetual professed brothers of the province 30 years or older. On March 3, 1970, Brother Mark's election was announced to the brothers by the provincial secretary, Brother Alfred Rodriguez, since Brother Hubert, the provincial, was in Rome at the special general chapter. In April, well after the announcement of the provincial-elect, elections for the provincial council began. On May 26, 1970, Brother Mark's provincial council was announced: Brothers Felician Fourrier, superintendent of Catholic Schools in Baton Rouge; Lee Barker, principal of St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis; Roland Smith, sub-director at what was beginning to be called *"the big house"* on Elysian Fields Avenue in New Orleans; and Brice Hendrick, principal-director at Vandebilt in Houma.

Tribute to Brother Hubert

In his first circular to the brothers, Brother Mark thanked outgoing provincial Brother Hubert for his outstanding leadership: *"As we passed through the most hectic period in the history of religious life, we can be ever thankful to the Sacred Heart that Hubert's was the guiding hand during these times. His keen insight into the religious life and the changes it was undergoing, his patience in educating and leading us along the way, his devotion to duty to the point of exhaustion, and above all his vital concern for the well-being of every individual brother, have been an inspiration for every one of us."* (August 19, 1970) Brother Hubert joined the small community in Baton Rouge at 2021 Terrace Avenue while he attended LSU to obtain a doctoral degree in psychology. Brother Brice replaced Brother Mark as principal at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans.

Following Brother Hubert's mandate and the election of Brother Mark as provincial, there was an excellent spirit in the province. According to the *Annuaire* for 1970, *"The religious and apostolic enthusiasm initiated by Vatican II and continued by our special general and provincial chapters of renewal, together with revitalization of the vocation program through the establishment of Formation and Vocation Committees, are indicative of the spirit of optimism prevailing throughout the province of New Orleans."* (64:51)

Overview of the Province in 1970

As noted in the tabulation below, in August of 1970, when the new council took office, the province counted a total of 173 brothers, 135 of them perpetually professed. The brothers conducted seven schools in the province and

lived in 14 residences. Seventeen brothers, four of them Africans, maintained four missions. One brother served on the general council in Rome. The province had three postulants two at Bay St. Louis and one in New Orleans. There were no novices.

Schools	Students	Brothers	Residences
Bishop Dunne High School, Dallas, TX	732	9	3900 Rugged Drive
Brother Martin HS, New Orleans, LA	1,380	25	4601 Elysian Fields Ave.
		4	4540 Elysian Fields Ave.
		3	4490 Painters Street
		3	1920 Robert E. Lee Blvd.
		7	1930 Robert E. Lee Blvd.
		7	2150 Brutus Street
Catholic High School, Baton Rouge, LA	438	20	855 Hearthstone Drive
		5	2021 Terrace Avenue
E. D. White High School, Thibodaux, LA	425	4	555 Cardinal Drive
McGill Institute, Mobile, AL	782	15	60 North Catherine Street
St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis, MS	517	41	304 South Beach Blvd.
Vandebilt Catholic High School, Houma, LA	697	4	209 South Hollywood Dr.
		3	Provincial Residence
		1	Generalate in Rome
		17	African Missions
		5	Various Colleges
Total U.S. Students and Brothers	4,971	173	

Provincial Residence Moved

In April of 1970, even before the provincial council decided to sell the house and property at Daphne, it agreed that the provincial residence should be moved from Daphne because of the mounting costs of operating and maintaining such a large house with so few brothers. The council further determined that the provincial house would be more accessible to the province either in New Orleans or Bay St. Louis, Daphne being at the extreme eastern edge of the province. At the first provincial council meeting of Brother Mark's term on August 23, 1970, the council reaffirmed the previous decision, leaving the exact location to the discretion of the provincial.

Thus, in a circular on September 23, Brother Mark announced that the provincial residence would be located in Bay St. Louis within the next few months. To save money, a small residence owned by St. Stanislaus on Hancock Street next to the brothers' cemetery was converted into a residence for the provincial and the brother assisting him as secretary. Because the new

quarters were small, much of the contents of the province's 23 file cabinets of archive materials, as well as a large collection of yearbooks and newspapers from the various schools, were not moved from Daphne to Bay St. Louis. Instead, they were transferred to microfilm, and most of the original copies were discarded. This small house would serve as the provincial residence for the next 18 years.

Hancock Street house which served as the provincial residence from 1970 to 1988

Province Committees Make Impact

One of Brother Mark's greatest gifts as an administrator was his ability to delegate. During his mandate, province committees, just beginning at that time, were given his full support and the necessary leeway to function within given parameters. These committees often became the breeding ground for future province leaders as members were given responsibility and participated fully in decision-making processes. Brother Mark encouraged brothers to develop initiative and creativity without losing perspective in balancing idealism with reality. For example, Brother Henry Gaither, vocation coordinator, devoted much time and creative energy to vocation and formation activities. He worked with the Recruiting and Formation Committee to develop a new program, later known as the prenovitiate program, of accepting high school graduates into local communities of brothers.

The Recruiting and Formation Committee's work during Brother Mark's first term had a far-reaching impact on the province. Brother Armand Little was a happy choice as its first chairman since he commanded the respect of all – old and young alike. After so many changes in the late '60s, there was a definite need to redefine and reorganize the province's formation

program. With potentially divisive issues regarding formation arising among the brothers, the Recruiting and Formation Committee under Brother Armand's steadying influence developed a new formation program to present to the province for approval. The 1973 Provincial Chapter totally endorsed the committee's program, laying to rest some of the recurring controversy about closing the juniorate. Taking into account new realities, the province formation program sought to incorporate the spiritual and theological ideas of Vatican II, as well as developments in modern psychology. The Recruiting and Formation Committee had indeed broken new ground. New candidates, living in small communities, could receive close personal direction and guidance in the religious life.

For its part, the Civil Rights Committee continued to sponsor workshops and days of recollection in an effort to change attitudes toward the poor, oppressed, and blacks. For example, in September of 1971 a six-member team from the Center of Ecumenical Action Training from Detroit gave the brothers a three-day Human Awareness Workshop in which brothers studied the role of religious educators in dealing with contemporary social issues such as race.

Freedom in the Apostolate

One of the concepts following in the wake of Vatican II was the value given to the human person, emphasizing the worth of the individual and of personal initiatives. In the New Orleans Province this shift of emphasis from institutions to the individual had many practical implications and applications. For example, in addition to nine brothers engaged in full-time studies in 1971-72, eight brothers worked in educational apostolates not connected to the province's schools. The 1972 *Annuaire* explained: *"In an effort to make a greater response to the needs of the Church, the brothers are undertaking educational apostolates outside of the framework of the schools conducted by the province. This freedom increases the flexibility of the community and provides the brothers a greater choice of endeavors and an increased means of using their talents."* (66:443-44)

For the most part those moving to outside apostolates were older brothers who no longer had the stamina to teach in a high school classroom, but they still had much to offer in higher levels of education. They included Brothers Bernard Tunney, principal of St. Joseph Preparatory Seminary in Baton Rouge; Felician Fourrier, superintendent of Catholic Schools in Baton Rouge since 1969; Louis Cavell, professor of English at Jackson State College

in Mississippi since 1969; Remigius David, professor in accounting at the University of Southeastern Louisiana in Hammond; Clement Cosgrove, associate professor of education at Loyola University in New Orleans since 1964; Claver Thomas, longtime professor of education at Spring Hill College in Mobile; Vincent Bono, instructor in mathematics at Louisiana State University in New Orleans; and Flavian Udinsky, staff member of the Model Schools Project sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Danforth Foundation, based at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

A good number of brothers working in high schools saw this movement toward individual apostolates as divisive, as an abandonment of the community's apostolates. Such thoughts owed their genesis to the new decision-making process. Now, an individual brother made a request to the provincial, who usually discussed the matter in council, and then made a decision. In the late '60s and the '70s, the wider community was not consulted in these decisions, so such assignments were often based more on the needs of the individual than on the needs of the province. Or, at least, that was the perception of the brothers. So the pendulum which had begun to swing from the extreme on the side of the institution during the '50s swung farther and farther during the '70s to the side of the individual. Brother Mark supported those brothers who had started a job *"outside the community"* and allowed some others to quit community assignments to work where they felt called.

For those brothers who felt called to serve the poor in ways not possible in school settings, this openness provided new opportunities. In 1973 two brothers obtained permission to work full-time in a social apostolate. Brother Collin Dugas directed St. Mary's Community Center, a diocesan-sponsored program for underprivileged youth in the French Quarter section of New Orleans; and Brother Donald Barry directed a similar program for deprived youth in Houma, Louisiana.

Small-Group Living

On January 17, 1971, opening of a house at 1001 Old Shell Road in Mobile marked the province's first experimental community in small-group living. Most small communities, however, arose out of expediency, due more to lack of accommodations in the larger residences than to a desire to experiment with small-group living. Certainly that was the case in Baton Rouge, where the large residence on campus which housed 21 brothers in 1971

could not accommodate five additional brothers who did not work at Catholic High School. So the province acquired a house on nearby Terrace Avenue.

But for the school year 1971-72, the province rented two more houses in Baton Rouge in a residential neighborhood in order to establish two small communities of four brothers each for the express purpose of experimenting in small-group living. The following year, the province purchased a larger residence at 1757 Avondale Drive and renovated it to accommodate a larger group of brothers, combining the two small local communities. These small communities sought to put more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, to give the brothers more direct responsibility for their lives, especially in areas of budget and finances, to be more open to visitors, and to allow experiments with different daily horariums and community prayer forms.

In a report to the general administration, Brother Mark noted that the formation of small-group communities was accepted with mixed emotions by the brothers in the province. *"The brothers forming the small communities, generally younger members, are enthusiastic; the older brothers who remain in the larger establishments are less enthusiastic, with some adopting a pessimistic attitude."* Brother Mark expressed strong support for small-group living: *"I feel that the formation of these small communities has revitalized our province. There is in these small residences a much greater concern for one another, everyone feels a definite responsibility for the success of the venture, there is real community life in progress, opportunity for vocation work is enhanced, experimentation in varied forms of community prayer life is facilitated."* Finally, Brother Mark noted that as a result of experimentation in community prayer, new prayer forms were emerging: *"Since most of these small establishments, eight in number, are occupied by brothers who are immersed in many extracurricular school activities, parish organizations, part-time college classes, as well as a full teaching load, many have found that community prayer on a daily schedule is difficult. In addition, many young brothers feel that such prayer experience as shared reflections satisfy their needs to a much greater degree than does the usual community prayer of the large residences."* (Report, Oct. 20, 1971)

Selecting Ordained Brothers

During Brother Mark's first term of office, the number of ordained brothers in the province increased from two to five. On December 6, 1970, the provincial council formally requested permission for Brother Albert Guarino to study for the priesthood after he transferred to the province from the New

York Province, which at that time had not accepted the concept of ordained brothers. The move had the prior approval of the general council and the New York council. On February 27, 1972, the provincial council approved the request of Brother Will McCue to study for the priesthood; and on April 8, 1973, the council sanctioned the request of Brother Carl Evans to study for ordination.

The whole concept of ordained brothers was still very new in the Institute, and the province went through several different processes of selecting brothers for ordination. The English copy of the superior general's circular on *Introduction of the Priesthood into the Institute,* dated April 1971, was still at the printer's in January of 1972, by which time the New Orleans Province had already accepted several brothers for ordination. In the beginning a brother requested ordination or volunteered to be ordained for the service of the community. His request was made to the provincial council, which then consulted with the rest of the brothers in the province who registered their approval or disapproval. The council then forwarded the approved name to Rome for approbation to begin studies. This process of consultation evolved; later, brothers in the province called forth a brother who could then accept or decline ordination. This latter process was used when the province called Brother Ray Hebert to study for ordination on June 10, 1975, during Brother Mark's second term.

Suppression of District in Africa

In October of 1972 Brother Mark was called to Rome for a meeting of all of the major superiors of the Institute, the first of an important series of such assemblies held during the mandate of Brother Maurice Ratté, superior general. At these meetings between the general chapters, which took place only every six years, major superiors discussed, in a spirit of collegiality, topics of concern in the Institute. Following the 1972 meeting in Rome, Brother Mark made his first visit to the missions in Africa from October 22 to November 10. It was not an easy visitation; painful issues needed addressing.

Following the provincial's visitation and a request by the provincial council, Rome suppressed the district. *"After consultation and agreement with the brothers of Uganda, the General Council hereby designates Gulu, Uganda, no longer a district but rather a house of the Province of New Orleans."* (Minutes, February 14, 1973) In a circular to the brothers, Brother Mark shared the above decision and explained that, as of April, there would be only five brothers in Africa. They would be living in one residence at Gulu. In accord with

the wishes of Bishop Cipriano Kihangire of Gulu, the brothers would be involved in training young men for the diocesan priesthood, as well as assisting in local schools. (Provincial Circular, February 24, 1973)

In the same year, the province donated all of its property and buildings at Alokolum to the bishop of Gulu to be used by him or a committee of Ugandan bishops as they saw fit. Since 1970 most of the buildings at Alokolum had been leased free-of-charge to the Bishops' Conference of Uganda for the use of Uganda Martyrs College, the major seminary. In return for ownership of the property in 1973, the bishop provided the brothers a residence on the mission compound at Lacor Minor Seminary, where most of them were then working.

Second Term Elections

On January 21, 1973, Brother Roland Smith, third provincial councilor, died unexpectedly at the age of 61. His death was a deep personal loss to Brother Mark, who had enjoyed not only his friendship but his deep spirit of peace and joy. The election of the next administration was thus advanced slightly to provide a replacement on the council. The first balloting took place in February. Even though Brother Mark received an overwhelming majority, election procedures then in effect required a runoff election. This procedure delayed the announcement of Brother Mark's re-election until March. A later provincial chapter revised election procedures to eliminate a runoff if on the first ballot *"a brother is selected as the first choice of two-thirds of the brothers voting."* (Province Directory, 98)

On March 19, Brother Mark's re-election was announced; and in May the new provincial council was elected: Brothers Lee Barker, Felician Fourrier, Hubert Bonnette, and Dacian LeBlanc. Brother Hubert, a councilor-elect, filled the unexpired term of Brother Roland until the new administration took office on August 15, 1973.

Chapter Sets Province Priorities

The next provincial chapter was scheduled for April 19 – 21, 1973, at St. Stanislaus. As the province prepared, two main topics emerged: small-group living and the prayer life of the local community. Evaluation, the thinking ran, needed to be added to renewal. In a preparatory letter to the brothers, Brother Mark sounded the theme for the chapter: *"The new Rule of Life, Constitutions, and Directory, the result of three years of prayer, research, experimentation,*

evaluation, and much honest and open discussion by many dedicated brothers, have left much of the responsibility for religious renewal squarely where it belongs: to each province, to each house, to each individual brother. Now after three years we have the opportunity to evaluate our progress as a province towards the ideal." (Circular, January 16, 1973)

To allow brothers ample time to prepare the chapter, election of delegates began in October of 1972. The chapter of 1973 marked the first time the majority of the delegates were elected at large from among the brothers in the province. Brothers elected 24 delegates, three times the number of *ex officio* delegates. Eight members would attend *ex officio*: the provincial, the four provincial councilors, two past provincials, and the regional superior in Africa since the district had not yet been suppressed when elections started. After the election of delegates, six committees were established to prepare for the chapter: spiritual life, community life, apostolate, formation, recruiting, and government. The committee on spiritual life sent each brother a 15-item questionnaire on personal and communal prayer life. The questions helped brothers reflect on these topics, and their answers provided chapter members with data to help them make decisions based on the brothers' needs and concerns.

The chapter lasted five full days, instead of the three planned. The most significant discussions, according to Brother Mark in a circular to the province, were those *"which dealt with the spiritual life, the community life, and the apostolic life, in short, the dedicated life of a Brother of the Sacred Heart."* (April 26, 1973) The chapter adopted for the province a list of seven ordered priority statements distilled from the new Rule of Life as objectives to guide its members and administration for the next three years. Local communities were called upon to have weekly house meetings and to begin each school year by discussing common prayer provisions of the Rule of Life before making out their plans for implementation. Plans were to be approved by the provincial council.

Evaluation of Experiments

Time had come for the provincial chapter to evaluate the various experiments in religious life conducted by the brothers in the New Orleans Province. One such experiment was small-group living; but by the time of the chapter of 1973, smaller communities in New Orleans and Baton Rouge had become so generally accepted, delegates saw no need to evaluate small-group living. On the other hand, some other experiments had not been so successful.

For example, one experiment of the early '70s in small communities was that of electing the local superior. This trend not only reflected the importance that American society placed on democracy, but it mirrored as well the mistrust of authority common in society at the time. Brothers were pushing to have more direct control of the various factors affecting their lives. One community, that in Dallas, even received permission to experiment with having no director at all because the local director had left the Institute during the year, and there was no one to replace him.

After much discussion and evaluation, chapter delegates agreed that the role of an elected superior had become almost meaningless. Brothers realized that, after rejecting the paternalistic, authoritarian model of director, they had failed to define a new model. At the chapter, they expressed a need for someone to lead them. They resolved that, since the primary role of the local director should be spiritual animation, directors should be chosen by the provincial council on the basis of spirituality, sensitivity, and competence. As much as possible, directors should delegate the temporalities of managing the house.

Spiritual Life Committee Created

After the experiment of electing directors was discontinued, chapter delegates made several related decisions regarding the local superiors and the importance of their role. One of the most far-reaching and concrete results of the chapter, according to the 1973 *Annuaire*, was *"the establishment of a permanent Spiritual Life Committee with a full-time chairman charged with the responsibility of assisting each local community in developing and sustaining a deeper spiritual life."* (67:47) To fulfill its mandate, the committee initiated semiannual, later annual, Directors' Workshops in the province to train local directors for their role of spiritual animation in their local communities.

Brother Albert Guarino chaired the first Spiritual Life Committee, which consisted of Brothers Bernard Couvillion, Hubert Bonnette, Ivy LeBlanc, Pierre St. Pierre, Ray Hebert, and Xavier Werneth. This committee began work immediately on its initial project, a three-day period of recollection and discussion for all directors held at Ave Maria Retreat House in Marrero from August 30 to September 2, 1973. Its purpose was that set by the chapter: *"to provide local directors an opportunity to consider prayerfully their leadership role and its responsibilities, and to discuss with other directors the nature of their ministry of animation."* (RS 15) The workshop's

success solidly established the credibility of the newly created committee and set the standard for future sessions. After more than 20 years, the committee continues to sponsor these periodic workshops.

Some Other Chapter Decisions

The chapter of 1973 recognized itself as the highest authority in the province and set the direction of the province for the next three years. Members made it clear that the brothers of the province, through their elected chapter delegates, would share a great responsibility for leadership. Among the more than 100 resolutions passed by the chapter were the following: an annual province-wide Easter gathering of brothers to celebrate the liturgy together and to discuss important matters; the institution of a school board consisting of three brothers and two laymen named by the provincial council for Brother Martin High School; reaffirmation of the ordained brother concept in the province by an overwhelming majority; new emphasis on the teaching of religion; a regular evaluation by a visiting team of brothers of each school's effectiveness in carrying out its mission in terms of religious spirit and growth in Christian community as well as in purely academic endeavors; the appointment of a postnovitiate director; and the establishment of a teacher-volunteer program.

This last idea, called the College House Concept, was just one of many innovative ideas that Brother Henry Gaither and the Vocation Committee introduced. Under this program, young men interested in learning more about the brothers' life were invited to live with them without making any type of commitment to join. Another idea that proved very beneficial was the Associate Program through which young men interested in religious life were provided with a spiritual director, met with the brothers on a regular basis, and came together annually for a vocation-discernment retreat. These programs and others, such as the Religious Life Study Groups and various panel discussions in many schools, were visible indications that the brothers continued to work hard for vocations even while the results were disheartening.

Decline in Personnel

During Brother Mark's first term of office, the personnel of the province continued to decline. From 1966 to 1969, the last four years of Brother Hubert's mandate, 40 professed brothers in the province had left

religious life. Nineteen of them were perpetual professed which necessitated obtaining an indult of secularization from the Vatican. Part of this departure process required the provincial to write a letter giving the background of each case and his opinion on it. This process was emotionally draining for the provincial, especially when the brother leaving happened to be a close friend.

When Brother Mark became provincial, the province numbered 173 professed brothers. By the end of his first term, the province had decreased to 148 brothers, 134 perpetual professed and 12 temporary professed, as well as 2 novices. There were no postulants. Twenty-seven brothers from the province had left the religious life, 16 of them perpetual professed. Among them was a former provincial, Brother André Robichaud, who left in 1972 to follow a vocation to the priesthood. New professions did not keep pace with the deaths and departures. Thus, the decline was rapid.

Even into his second term of office, Brother Mark suffered through this decline. Another nine professed brothers left the community, two of them members of his provincial council. On December 1, 1974, Brother Mark announced to the province that his fourth councilor, Brother Dacian LeBlanc, on a leave of absence since August, had requested an indult of secularization. In accordance with the procedures outlined in the Province Directory, Brother Brice Hendrick, the recipient of the next highest number of votes in the 1973 election, replaced him on the council. Then Brother Brice left the community in June of 1975. He was replaced on the council by Brother Donnan Berry, who had succeeded him earlier as principal of Brother Martin High School.

Brother Mark was forced to write to the brothers, *"Unhappy depletions in our ranks in recent months have hastened the need for serious deliberation and decisions on the part of the provincial council concerning the staffing of seven schools of the province in the years to come and more specifically, Bishop Dunne High School, McGill High School, Vandebilt Catholic High School, and E.D. White Catholic High School for the next year."* (Circular, Sept. 17, 1975) These four schools were diocesan-owned schools, and a withdrawal from any one of them would mean that adequate notice would have to be given to the proper authorities. Brother Mark invited opinions from the brothers to help the council in its deliberations. One issue in the province was whether or not it was better to continue to staff seven schools on a limited basis or to withdraw from one or more and consolidate to have a stronger impact or greater effectiveness in fewer schools.

Response from the brothers was overwhelming, giving the council a wide variety of opinions to study. Early in the 1975-76 school year, the council

announced that the brothers would leave Bishop Dunne High School in Dallas at the end of the year. It was a painful decision, one difficult for the brothers in Dallas to accept; but they continued to the very end to work diligently, preparing the people there for a smooth transition.

Some Happy News

With so many brothers leaving and the number of deaths increasing with the aging of the brothers, it was not often that Brother Mark had the occasion to write the brothers with happy news. But the sale of the St. Aloysius property was one such happy occasion. During the previous five years, several deals for selling the property collapsed at the last moment. Various prospective purchasers had paid the province $40,000 in option fees, of which the provincial council had used $35,000 for the demolition of the buildings. On September 19, 1974, Brother Mark was finally able to tell the brothers that he *"received a phone call this morning from the attorney of the prospective purchaser of the St. Aloysius property. He wanted to know to whom the check for $630,000.00 was to be made out. Since an agreement to purchase has already been signed, it seems that all bureaucratic procedures have been completed. Thanks to the Sacred Heart our retirement fund should shortly be substantially increased."* The sale was finalized October 10 when the property became option clear. The United States Postal Service purchased the property for a net sum of $630,000 a compromise between the $700,000 the province was asking and the $586,000 the Post Office was offering.

Retirement Fund

As a provincial councilor, Brother Mark had brought to the attention of the council several times the need for the province to establish a retirement plan to assure proper care for the brothers who were getting older and living longer. With fewer people joining, Brother Mark knew that the problem would get worse in the future. In May of 1969, an insurance expert made a presentation to the provincial council about establishing a retirement fund for the brothers. Much discussion followed his presentation, but the council tabled the matter. In November 1969, the council again took up the retirement fund topic, but members remained divided on the principle of having such a fund. They were well aware of the province's heavy debt after the consolidation construction at Brother Martin High School. They also needed to find money to build at St. Stanislaus following Hurricane Camille, which

had hit Bay St. Louis just several weeks earlier. So the matter had to be tabled; no money was available.

As provincial four years later, Brother Mark took steps to implement the needed retirement fund. On April 8, 1973, his provincial council officially set up a retirement fund and decided to *"dedicate to this fund all extraordinary receipts from sale of properties, interest payments, in so far as our ordinary expenses can be met by ordinary receipts from our schools and salaries of the brothers."* Later that same month, the provincial chapter overwhelming approved the concept. Over the next few years, with $630,000 from the sale of the St. Aloysius property in 1974, along with $240,000 from the balance of payments for the scholasticate at Spring Hill, Brother Mark was able to invest substantial money in a retirement fund and still manage the province debt. With accumulated interest and the sale of other properties, such as the Terrace Avenue house in Baton Rouge, the retirement fund grew to slightly over $1.5 million by the end of Brother Mark's term in 1976.

Decentralization of Finances

During Brother Mark's term a decentralization of finances took place in the province. This occurred, not so much by a conscious decision or policy from the provincial council, but rather simply by the course of events. For the most part, finances of the houses and schools had been separated earlier. Community-owned schools paid the brothers working in them an annual cost-of-living stipend which was sent to each brother's local community. This stipend remained fixed at $2,500 for more than 10 years. Diocesan-owned schools paid the brothers according to diocesan stipends for religious or according to contracts worked out with the provincial. Local communities sent any surplus money to the provincial treasurer. Salaries of brothers in other apostolates went directly to the provincial treasurer, who in turn sent a living stipend of $2,500 to their local communities.

The provincial council, as always, set the assessment which each community-owned school remitted to the provincial treasury. These assessments were based on the bare minimum the province needed to operate. The brothers had determined to keep tuitions in their schools as low as possible to assure that Catholic education remain affordable. In addition, schools were faced with paying equitable salaries to an ever-increasing number of lay teachers as the numbers of brothers declined.

Until late 1970 when the provincial council realized the serious need to establish a province retirement fund, most major repairs and capital

improvements in community-owned schools were made with province funds. The province had issued bonds in 1967 to pay for the new dormitory at St. Stanislaus. The province also paid for the addition to Cor Jesu to form Brother Martin High School in 1969. After Hurricane Camille, the province assumed a 30-year Small Business Administration loan in 1970 to pay for the new school at St. Stanislaus. Thus, the province debt at the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1971, stood at $1,939,000. Annual payments on the province debt were significant and would continue to be so for another 16 years until 1986.

On December 6, 1970, the provincial council approved a request from the advisory board at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, directed by Brother Donnan Berry, to initiate a building-fund drive to raise $250,000 for needed facilities there. A major shift was taking place in province finances: schools would now take financial responsibility for future improvements since the province could no longer help. This reality forced school administrations to pay much more attention to fundraising and long-range development programs in their schools. Such ideas were by no means new. Brother Martin, as provincial, had commissioned Brother Louis Cavell to raise money among the alumni at St. Aloysius in New Orleans. Also, Brother Celestine Algero had been working since 1966 as coordinator of a progression program at St. Stanislaus. But now through necessity such school development programs received new impetus.

Unhealthy Attitude Addressed

Friendly competition among the brothers' schools took an unhealthy turn in the early '70s. Feeling the effects of the rapid decline in numbers of brothers, some school officials pressured the provincial to maintain the number of brothers working in their schools. Comparisons of the numbers assigned to each school fueled the fires of competition. Some brothers felt that priority in assigning personnel should be given to community-owned schools in Bay St. Louis, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge. Others resented the attitude of some brothers that ministry in community-owned schools was more important to the province than work in diocesan schools. The annual Easter reunions begun in 1974 did much to dispel this unhealthy attitude of competition among the brothers. Presentations by each school and open discussion of important issues led to a greater unity within the province.

1976 Chapter Updates Directory

To assure sufficient time for the triennial provincial chapter, the council scheduled it for the 1975 Christmas holidays, rather than the shorter 1976 Easter holidays. So, the 1976 Provincial Chapter gathered at Bay St. Louis on December 27, 1975, and met until December 30. Seven brothers were members by right of office: the provincial, the four councilors, one past provincial not serving on the council, and one member of the general administration. The latter, Brother Marcel Riviere, did not attend. Elected delegates were to number 21, three times the number of *ex-officio* members. But three brothers tied for the 21st spot; all three became members, making 23 elected delegates. The average age of the delegates was 48, with Brother Bernard Couvillion the youngest at 29 and Brother Martin Hernandez the oldest at 71. All brothers were invited to attend the chapter and take part in its discussions.

Much of the chapter was devoted to updating the Province Directory, a collection of resolutions from previous chapters. Community legislation regarding election processes, for example, needed clarification. The chapter's main focus, however, was religious and spiritual formation in the community and apostolate. The chapter overwhelmingly endorsed the work begun by the Spiritual Life Committee and accepted definite goals to pursue during the coming three years, goals devoted to the spiritual life of the brothers. Each community-owned school, the chapter resolved, must establish definite operational structures. This mandate was in keeping with a major shift toward more team work and shared decision-making in the schools. Furthermore, the chapter specified that each of the brothers' schools would be visited every four years by a special committee to evaluate the institution's effectiveness in fostering religious spirit and the growth of Christian community. The chapter also endorsed the Formation Manual developed by the province Formation Committee and made it part of the Province Directory.

This chapter defined as well the province's need for ordained brothers, unanimously expressing a desire for additional ordained brothers to provide meaningful daily communal liturgies where local priests could not do so. To assure adequate preparation of the ordained brothers for the sacramental dimension of building of a liturgy-centered community, the chapter asked a committee of brothers to evaluate the formation programs of brothers preparing for ordination and to supplement such programs as necessary. The chapter also refined the consultation process used to select brothers for ordination, placing more emphasis on the call by the community. Finally the chapter determined that the province would employ the term *"ordained*

brother" to underscore the lay identity of the brother's vocation and to avoid confusion caused by the title *brother-priest*.

Balance and Equilibrium

Brother Mark's six years in office were very significant in the life of the province. In his own quiet way, he allowed new initiatives to develop; but at the same time he restored a sense of stability which had been upset by the turmoil following Vatican II. All brothers, young and old, liberal and conservative, had a deep respect for Brother Mark. An ideal leader for this period of transition, he was an innate peacemaker, a man of tact, quiet and relaxed, yet concerned, compassionate, and very much aware of what was happening in the community, Church, and society. Most of all, he was approachable, attentive, and prudent, but never impulsive. Throughout his term, he proved himself practical and down to earth. His even temper and beguiling sense of humor, even in times of great stress, endeared him to the brothers.

Ironically, Brother Mark's greatest weakness as provincial gave rise to what became one of the province's strongest assets. Brother Mark always found it difficult, even as a local superior, to talk to brothers in interviews or to offer spiritual direction. When he was provincial, the brothers felt a need for this type of spiritual animation, and that omission led the chapter of 1973 to establish the Spiritual Life Committee. Now, after more than 20 years, that committee, perhaps more than any other, continues to animate the province. Sponsoring province retreats and workshops, preparing the Easter reunions and the communal liturgies for province gatherings, the Spiritual Life Committee creates an atmosphere conducive to spiritual growth.

CHAPTER 8

BROTHER LEE

(1976-1982)

In his first circular letter to the province, Brother Lee Barker began, *"In an action showing his consideration and making it possible for the new provincial to attend the General Chapter in Rome, Brother Mark Thornton brought his administration to a close on the last day of June 1976, several weeks prior to the regular termination date of his second term of office. All of us in the province are indebted to Brother Mark for his prudent leadership during the past six years of dedicated service."* (Circular, July 2, 1976)

First balloting for Brother Mark's successor had begun on February 4, 1976; nominees were announced on February 28; and the runoff took place on March 19 all done efficiently by mail. Brother Lee was announced as provincial-elect. In May election of his council began. Brother Mark was elected as first councilor. Returning to the council were Brothers Hubert Bonnette, president-director of St. Stanislaus, and Felician Fourrier, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Baton Rouge Diocese. Brother Paul Montero, principal of St. Stanislaus, was the only new council member. On leaving office as provincial, Brother Mark became local director in Thibodaux and returned to the classroom at E. D. White.

Brother Lee brought to the provincial's office his extensive experience in school administration, not to mention his background as a master of formation. After making the grand novitiate in Rome in 1957, he had been named postulant master at the juniorate in Daphne, Alabama. Then, in 1963, he became director-principal at St. Aloysius in New Orleans. Two years later he relinquished the role of director and continued as principal until 1966 when he was named principal at St. Stanislaus, a position he held for 10 years until he was elected provincial. By this time, he had served 15 years as a provincial councilor.

As teacher, postulant master, and principal, Brother Lee proved himself to be even-tempered, compassionate, and calm in stressful situations.

Politeness and gentleness characterized his dealings with everyone. Brother Lee so impressed Brother Jules Ledoux, who visited the province in 1962 before becoming superior general, that he recommended him to the general council as a prospective provincial. He reported: *"Brother Lee has always been described as a fine man. He is more than that, being poised, religious to the core, capable of doing a considerable amount of work and exerting a good moral influence upon the young. . . . He is highly esteemed and, as far as I know, could be depended upon in every way."* (Report, pp. 32, 34)

Brother Lee's handsome features, tall and dignified stature, athletic appearance, refined language, and neatly combed hair all contributed to his image of a vocation-poster brother. In addition, he had a special charisma with young boys who enjoyed his corny jokes, his spellbinding horror stories, and his sleight-of-hand magic tricks. His remarkable ability to pacify those who were upset and to influence others earned him the sobriquet *"Super Suave"* among some brothers. He was in every way a true gentleman.

When Brother Lee took office in July of 1976, the country was in the midst of its bicentennial celebrations. Vietnam, Watergate, and Nixon's resignation were all behind the American people. The optimistic spirit in the country was reflected in the province, which now numbered 143 brothers in 15 residences and six schools. Seven brothers were temporary professed; five were novices. Seven young men were to begin the prenovitiate in August, a very hopeful sign to the brothers.

Recruiting and Vocations

In 1976 there were six prenovices living with the brothers on Robert E. Lee Boulevard in New Orleans and a seventh at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis. The *Annuaire* for that year commented: *"The vocation picture has brightened visibly. An upsurge in interest in the Brothers' life and requests for entry on the part of candidates give hope that the vocation drought may be over. . . . Perhaps in this vital sphere of vocations, we may have rounded the corner. We hope so."* (70:41)

Brother Lee took a special interest in recruiting and vocation work. During his administration, the Recruiting and Formation Committee was divided into two committees: a Recruiting and Vocation Committee and a

Formation Committee. Brother Lee enthusiastically supported the many efforts of the Recruiting and Vocation Committee, chaired by Brother Henry Gaither, who served as Vocation Director from 1970 to 1980. Brother Lee appointed brothers in each school to coordinate vocation activities with the committee.

On Palm Sunday weekend in 1979, the committee sponsored the first of 15 annual Associate Retreats, most of which were held in Lacombe, Louisiana. These annual retreats for young men, called associates, considering their vocation were very popular and helped quite a few young men reach a decision. On the average about 20 to 30 associates made each retreat. Brother Lee attended these retreats and he made a concerted effort to get a large number of brothers of all ages involved in them. In spite of the brothers' best efforts, the vocation crisis continued. During Brother Lee's six years as provincial, 25 candidates entered the prenovitiate. Of those, only seven made first vows.

Also, Brother Lee worked with several interested laymen led by Mr. Gerry Schoen to set up a Vocational Development Fund to help finance the education of candidates to the religious life. This fund, which began with $20,000 collected from friends of the brothers during Brother Lee's administration, contributed the first annual donations of $1,000 each to the novitiate and prenovitiate in 1982. Since that time the fund has grown considerably and has contributed about $10,000 each year to the formation programs in the province and in Africa. The fund also financed the semiannual publication of *Brothers of the Sacred Heart Newsletter*, which Brother Aquin Gauthier wrote and mailed to 27,100 alumni, parents, and students to raise the level of awareness about the vocation of a Brother of the Sacred Heart. This semiannual publication, first issued in 1981, ran through 1988.

General and Provincial Chapter Goals

In July 1976, Brothers Hubert Bonnette and Bernard Couvillion, first alternate, accompanied Brother Lee to Rome as delegates to the 29th General Chapter which re-elected Brother Maurice Ratté as superior general and Brother Marcel Riviere as the second of six assistants general. On his return from the chapter, Brother Lee wrote to the brothers that *"the acts of the chapter . . . express our commitment to ongoing renewal and prayerful evaluation of each aspect of the Institute."* He reported that *"it was the Chapter's decision to keep the text of the Rule unchanged for the next six years, `ad experimentum,' but under careful study by a standing committee*

given instructions by the assembly." He noted that the general chapter of 1976 was pleased with the Rule of Life that had been adopted in 1970: *"The high regard in which the delegates held the new Rule quickly became apparent; a profound respect for its spirit, its depth of faith, its wisdom, and its flexibility permeated all considerations, leading to its unanimous reaffirmation."* (Circular, August 12, 1976) In another circular a month later, Brother Lee encouraged brothers to *"take time on a regular basis to read prayerfully from the Rule of Life. For us Brothers of the Sacred Heart, our Rule of Life is the basis of our shared vision of service, our communal response to the grace of our vocation, and the mainspring of our spiritual life. A fervent living of our lives and a joyful giving of ourselves as men consecrated to God are our responses to God's immeasurable love for us."* (Circular, September 15, 1976)

The thrust of the general chapter reflected that of the New Orleans provincial chapter held seven months earlier. A primary goal set by the provincial chapter was *"the continual spiritual, intellectual, and apostolic development of the Brothers, a goal whose importance was heightened by the expressions of Vatican II calling for personal renewal particularly in spirituality and theology."* Another goal set by the same chapter was that *"over the next three years, the provincial will contact each Brother to talk with him about participating in some form of personal renewal program. The nature, length, and type of renewal program will be worked out by the individual in discussion with the provincial."* (1976 Provincial Chapter Minutes, Resolution 9)

Personal Renewal

The province goal of increased personal contact between brothers and those in authority – local superiors, school administrators, and the provincial – was intended to foster *"a spirit of true dialogue: real exchange, affirmation of each individual's values, mutual searching for the will of God, discernment of the Spirit, and deep respect for the role of leadership."* (RS 9) In this same spirit, the chapter added to the Province Directory an article requiring the provincial to meet each brother privately in interviews at least twice a year. (RS 11) Brother Lee faithfully visited the local communities and interviewed the brothers. He prepared interviews carefully and often inquired about the brothers' health, encouraging them to get regular physical checkups. He also used these occasions to address any personal problems the brothers were experiencing and to encourage them to participate in renewal sessions.

Brother Lee, in another move to foster individual renewal, faced the problem of substance abuse calmly but resolutely. Cognizant of the ravages of alcoholism in American society, he undertook to educate the province, to lead all of the brothers to higher ground. His efforts yielded one of the significant achievements of his first term. In publishing a province policy on alcohol abuse and chemical dependency on October 18, 1978, he pointed out that religious were not immune to this disease of addiction. Many other religious congregations and dioceses, he noted, already had policies in place. The province policy, studied by the provincial council, called for a program of education and information aimed not just at individual brothers or communities, but at the entire membership. Province workshops were created for that purpose. The policy clearly outlined an intervention procedure that respected the dignity of the individual, clarified the responsibility of the local community, and supplied the local superior with a resource manual all to provide a brother with a drinking problem the opportunity to receive necessary treatment before he reached the crisis stage of addiction.

Speaking about other individual renewal programs, Brother Lee encouraged some brothers to attend the semester-long program sponsored by the Christian Brothers at Sangre de Cristo Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Until the fall of 1967, when Brother Collin Dugas participated, this renewal program was open only to Christian Brothers. For years to come, the only other participants permitted into the program were Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Nine brothers had previously completed the program by the time Brother Lee became provincial, and all praised it. During Brother Lee's tenure, seven more brothers from the province participated in the program; in 1979 one of them, Brother Francis Fleming, joined the staff at the center and remained there until 1983. During that time, the program welcomed first brothers and priests of all religious communities and later sisters as well.

Communal Renewal

While Brother Mark had brought a stabilizing influence to the province following the upheavals and turbulence caused by the vast changes of the previous administration, some unresolved tensions remained. Different theologies, religious practices, and priorities among the brothers still vexed the province. It fell to the 1976 Provincial Chapter to seek some solutions. Besides looking to the province leadership to provide opportunities for personal renewal, chapter delegates chose province-sponsored renewal programs as a means to bring about a stronger commitment to the Rule of

Life as a source of unity. Since some resistance to renewal still lingered, the chapter urged the provincial to work closely with various province committees to continue moving the province forward in this difficult area.

The 1976 Provincial Chapter reaffirmed that the Spiritual Life Committee should help the provincial in leading the brothers in community renewal. The chapter charged the committee to go beyond its annual leadership workshops to help local directors in their role of animation. To this end, the chapter mandated a meeting at the beginning of each school year in every local community so that the local director, the house council, the provincial, and a member of the Spiritual Life Committee could determine together how the committee might support and sustain the local director's efforts at community renewal. Such support might include helping with communal and liturgical prayer or leading house meetings on the new Rule. The chapter further decided that the chairman of this very active permanent committee should be released from other duties to give priority to committee work. The provincial council later named Brother Bernard Couvillion, director of prenovices, to this important position.

In November of 1977, members of the Spiritual Life Committee sponsored a three-day Brothers' Workshop on Spirituality and the Apostolate in the revised Rule. All brothers were welcomed, not just directors. Also, in conjunction with Brother Jacques Rondeau and other members of the general council, the committee sponsored two additional workshops on the Rule of Life: one for four days at Bay St. Louis during the Easter break and one for three days during the summer at the Robert E. Lee residences in New Orleans. These voluntary programs reached only small groups of brothers. For planning purposes, Brother Lee had conducted a survey to determine interest. Only 46 brothers had expressed a desire to attend such a workshop, though Brother Lee stressed in his letter, *"Your response on this form is an INDICATION of INTEREST but not a COMMITMENT."* (Circular, September 22, 1977)

During this time, conflict developed between Brother Lee and members of the Spiritual Life Committee over what the committee saw as the provincial's cautious middle-of-the-road approach to renewal. The committee wanted to reach every brother and expected the provincial to take a more assertive role in urging brothers to attend renewal workshops. For his part, the provincial stressed the need, as he perceived it, for the committee to limit its expectations, given the age and traditional formation of the older brothers. This conflict surfaced again in November of 1979 when the Spiritual Life Committee proposed that visiting members of the general council give a series of five talks on the Rule in each local community. Through these talks,

committee members sought to assure that every brother had some familiarity with the topics of renewal. Committee members feared that the province could fragment into the *"renewed"* and the *"non-renewed."* Indeed, some brothers held that others were being permitted to exempt themselves from this critical process by choosing not to participate in any renewal program.

Brother Lee's hesitancy to press for participation in renewal workshops arose, in large part, from his sensitivity to the difficulties some brothers were still experiencing in accepting renewal at all. But he did not hesitate to apply pressure in other contexts, especially on young brothers, to change their ways. Thus, his critics found a certain ambivalence in his less vigorous methods regarding renewal. This tension persisted through most of Brother Lee's tenure.

Brother Lee believed that renewal of religious life would be a long process and that it could not be accomplished by edict. An adage which he fondly quoted when he was postulant master *"Be not the first by which the new is tried, nor yet the last to lay the old aside"* captures Brother Lee's cautious stance toward life in general and characterizes his gentle approach to renewal of religious life. This reserve found expression in his circular letters. Though he frequently addressed the need for individual renewal, personal prayer, and prayerful reading of the Rule, he often modified assertions with qualifiers such as: *"One way of defining . . . ," "If we are searching . . . ," "Perhaps we need . . . ,"* and *"Or maybe . . . ."* Reading more than linguistic gentility into such phrases, some brothers perceived mixed messages regarding the province's commitment to renewal.

Peace and Justice Committee

The 1976 Provincial Chapter established the Peace and Justice Committee to replace the province's Civil Rights Committee. The chapter charged the new committee *"to stimulate positive thinking in the province and to keep the brothers aware of our progress in this now vital field and to aid in the formation of the social consciousness of the brothers."* (Minutes, RS 59) The chapter clearly did not want the committee to become actively involved in protest demonstrations nor to take strong advocacy positions since these actions often had more negative than positive effects in changing attitudes.

Thus, the Peace and Justice Committee, under the leadership of Brother Xavier Werneth, its first chairman, published a bulletin entitled *Brotherhood:*

Positive Thoughts for Peace and Justice for the faculties of the brothers' schools. This one-page monthly bulletin, which appeared from 1977 to 1981, heightened awareness on matters of peace and social justice. The committee sponsored, as well, several "sharing sessions" for the chairpersons of the religion and social studies departments. One outcome of these sessions was the recommendation that every religion department set up service programs to enable students to help needy people in their communities.

The chapter also asked the committee to continue its annual review of the province's progress in racial integration and in scholarships and reduced tuition to poor families. Surveys conducted from 1976 through 1978 revealed *"a need for greater representation of minority groups in our schools both in the student body and on the faculty."* (*Brotherhood* 2:11, December 1978) These surveys showed, for example, that on the average, African-Americans constituted only 6 percent of the student bodies. Progress was equally slow in recruiting minority faculty members. In 1976-77, in spite of administrators' best efforts at recruiting, only five African-Americans taught in the brothers' schools: two at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans, two at Catholic High in Baton Rouge, and one at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis.

Leadership Accountability

More than ever before, the provincial chapter of 1976, recognizing itself as the highest authority in the province, took several strong actions to assure more shared responsibility and accountability in leadership. For example, it mandated that the provincial report on the implementation of its resolutions each year at the Easter gathering of all the brothers. The chapter continued to give the provincial and his council much trust and leeway, but it also set goals and objectives for the province and held the administration accountable.

Not limited to religious life as such, the spirit of renewal reached into areas of the apostolate, focusing on leadership styles. New concepts of authority emphasizing collegiality, subsidiarity, and accountability brought about major changes in school administration. In this regard, the chapter called for principals of community-owned schools to establish structures, like faculty advisory councils to help in administering the educational program, and boards for the government and operation of the school in areas of major policy and finances.

Collaboration with other Provinces

Another significant development during Brother Lee's first term was increased collaboration with the New York and New England Provinces. The three provincials began to meet semiannually. Formation personnel from the three provinces also started to meet regularly. On October 8-9, 1977, Brother Bernard Couvillion, director of the prenovitiate and postnovitiate programs in the province, hosted a meeting in New Orleans for the formation personnel from the three United States provinces. After discussing the goals and details of their various programs, the formation personnel decided to continue meeting and collaborating. The next year they proposed that the concept of a combined novitiate be studied.

The Formation Committee for each province studied the idea of a combined novitiate; and at the third annual meeting of the interprovince formation personnel in October 1979, the members drew up a formal proposal to be presented to the provincials. On December 4, 1979, Brother Lee announced to the province that the three United States provincials agreed to present the proposal for a combined novitiate to their respective councils. In a letter dated July 7, 1980, Brother Lee informed the brothers that the various councils accepted the recommendations of the Interprovince Formation Committee, thus launching a combined United States novitiate in New Orleans in January 1981.

Brother Lee, like previous provincials, tried unsuccessfully to have some type of renewal program in English sponsored by the Institute in Rome. He hoped that brothers of the New Orleans Province might profit from a program similar to the one offered only in French at the generalate. Thus, he began speaking with the two other United States provincials, Brother Patrick Reidy of New York and Brother John Hebert of New England, about tri-province sponsorship. He happily wrote the brothers: *"The three US provincials have agreed to have a joint, English-speaking renewal session at Belvidere, NJ, during the summer of 1979. The Spiritual Life Committees of the three Provinces are currently beginning plans for this session. Each province will send eight brothers as participants."* (Circular, Sept. 1, 1977)

A tri-province team, composed of Brothers Paul Montero (NO), Dennis Burke (NY), Leo Labbe (NE), and later Ray Hebert (NO), as an ordained brother, worked with Brother Patrick Reidy to plan and facilitate the first summer session to be held at the Renewal Center in Belvidere, New Jersey, during July 1979. This month-long renewal program, modeled on the Sangre

sessions, was built around the areas of prayer, community, and ministry. Invited presenters explored various dimensions of these three essential components of religious life. Brothers participated in formal and informal discussion sessions and worked in small groups to prepare the daily liturgy. The schedule provided time for rest, relaxation, and recreation, as well as three days of "*desert experience*" for personal reflection. Eighteen brothers from the three United States provinces participated in *The Summer of '79*, the first edition of a renewal session that continued for 12 summers.

Also during Brother Lee's administration a personnel exchange program between the New Orleans province and the district of England began. Brothers Patrick McGinity and Maurus Bordelon lived with the brothers in England and taught at St. Columba's College in St. Albans, while Brothers Ernest Loiselle and Charles Windmill from the district of England lived and worked with the brothers in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Visitations and Recommendations

In April of 1977, three members of the general administration, Brothers Marcel Riviere, Lionel Goulet, and Jacques Rondeau, rendered a 10-day team visit to the New Orleans Province. According to a letter written by the team members to the brothers: *"The general council, at various meetings of the Institute and especially at the general chapter of 1976, had been encouraged to review the traditional form of province and district visitations. . . . The team visit will not necessarily replace the usual `canonical' one but is thought of as a variation or complement to those visits."* The general councillors hoped to foster by their visit a closer relationship between the brothers of the province and the general administration early in their mandate and make the general council aware of the province's goals and objectives. During the Easter gathering of 1977, the team members addressed all of the assembled brothers for an hour on Holy Saturday. They spoke afterwards for another hour with the local directors. Later in their short visit, they met with the provincial council and some of the province committees.

In November of 1979, Brother Marcel returned with Brother Lionel to make a second province visitation. Besides visiting each house and school and interviewing each brother, they gave a series of five talks on the spirituality of the new Rule at the request of the Spiritual Life Committee and with the approval of the provincial council. In some locales, such as Thibodaux and Houma, small local communities were combined for the presentations, often given in two sessions of several hours each.

In a letter to all the brothers in the province, Brother Marcel clarified that the first phase of renewal, involving external change in structures, was coming to a close. Overlapping with it was the second phase of *"interior renewal or second conversion"* which called for a *"new and deeper relationship with the Lord together with a new zeal and often a new effectiveness in ministry."* He went on to urge the brothers to continue their renewal efforts: *"I have no hesitation in asking you to give more time, concern, and initiative to phases two and three of the renewal, that is, to our second conversion and to the renewal of our life together."* (November 30, 1979)

As usual, the visitors from Rome were highly impressed with the schools in the province. *"We were especially struck,"* wrote Brother Marcel for himself and Brother Lionel, *"by the closeness of the Brothers and staff to the students and their parents, the amount of teaching being done, the learning atmosphere, and the relaxed, happy disposition of almost everyone we met."* In their report to the provincial, Brother Marcel noted that even though the province spirit was very high, the brothers were putting almost all of their energies into the apostolate: *"The brothers give just about all of their time and energies to their students and parents. For all, the school is the main focus, almost the only focus. This rootedness and insertion gives us the best promise of giving a good Christian message and witness."* (November 30, 1979)

Crucial components of a full religious life, Brother Marcel cautioned, seemed out of balance. Work so consumed the brothers that it hampered the development of their spiritual and community life. To counteract the primacy of work, Brother Marcel recommended that each residence be required to develop a horarium, including its prayer schedule and community meetings, and present it to the provincial council for approval. Another recommendation, one directed to the large 40-brother community at Bay St. Louis, proved to be far ahead of its time. For community prayers and discussions, Brother Marcel suggested that the community should be organized in smaller groups to accommodate the schedules of prefects, teachers, administrators, and retired brothers. Such an attempt at reorganization did not occur for another 10 years, that is, until Brother Marcel was appointed director of the community in Bay St. Louis.

Following the recommendations of the general councilors, the provincial chapter of 1979 discussed the topic of activism among the brothers and passed resolutions aimed at helping them achieve a better balance. It mandated that local communities have house meetings at least twice a month and that the various province committees provide local directors with materials for

worthwhile community discussions. It also called upon those in authority at every level to help brothers balance their activity where necessary.

Second Term Priorities

In August of 1979, Brother Lee began his second term of office with a slightly different council. He had been re-elected on the first ballot, receiving 69 percent of the first place votes. Brother Mark Thornton, who was serving as president of St. Stanislaus, was re-elected first councilor. Newly elected to the council, replacing Brother Hubert Bonnette as second councilor, was Brother Xavier Werneth, director and principal at E. D. White in Thibodaux. Completing the council were Brothers Paul Montero, director of novices, and Felician Fourrier, recently appointed by Governor Edwin Edwards of Louisiana to a six-year term on the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in Baton Rouge.

During his second term, Brother Lee's insistence on individual renewal was more vigorous. In his circulars, he began quoting the new Rule rather than just encouraging brothers to read it. Prayer remained his constant theme: *"Each of us,"* he wrote, *"needs to confront ourselves with the basic question of our priorities and the rhythm of prayer in our life. Our greatest fulfillment as Brothers will come when we strive to integrate the active and the contemplative aspects of our lives. There is no question about how work and leisure can consume all of our waking hours, leaving little or no time for the very thing that insures us to be what we left parents, home, and possessions to become: a follower of Jesus Christ. It is our devotion to prayer the Rule of Life treats of the helps that we have in Articles 33 to 38 that enables us to share time with the person Jesus Christ. Personal prayer supports community prayer, and community prayer encourages personal prayer."* (Circular, August 28, 1980)

Province Participation in Rule Revision

The New Orleans Province, especially through two of its members, was very much involved in the revision of the Rule of Life. The General Council established a Commission of Six to prepare a draft of the revised Rule to present to the general chapter in 1982. Brother Marcel Riviere, assistant general, chaired this commission, and Brother Bernard Couvillion, oneof the other five members of this committee, went to Rome in August of 1979 to work on the project. Brother Lee noted the significant role of the province in

this undertaking: *"We, as a province, have an opportunity to make a contribution to the future life of the Institute and to the elements that will constitute the fabric of the Rule of Life that will be submitted for final approval by Rome after the General Chapter of 1982. We are, indeed, living in history-making times."* (Circular, October, 1979)

The series of five talks given by Brothers Marcel Riviere and Lionel Goulet on the theology of the new Rule were only one part of the province's efforts to participate in the revision project. During the first three months of 1980, the whole province collaborated in the Rule Revision Project under the direction of the Spiritual Life Committee. The project started with the Directors' Workshop at the Abbey Christian Life Center in St. Benedict, Louisiana, where directors were presented discussion materials on the Rule. Local directors then discerned how to make best use of the materials in their communities. Then, in the fall of 1980, the Commission of Six solicited the province for ideas concerning the Rule in preparation for the general chapter of 1982. The provincial council invited Brother Bernard to visit each local community to present the proposed revisions of the Rule and to explain the 15 proposals that the province project had produced.

Insurance Advisory Board

Upon the recommendation of Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial treasurer, the provincial council in 1979 established an Insurance Advisory Board consisting of six professional insurers from different agencies: Messrs. Al Aparicio and Thomas Gilmore of New Orleans, Messrs. Steve Fourrier and Jack Persac of Baton Rouge, Mr. Ames Kergosien of Bay St. Louis, and Mr. Jack Thompson of Gulfport. These men met periodically with the provincial and treasurer to advise them on various insurance matters. For example, the committee studied the brothers' risks in operating a summer camp with water sports and advised how much liability insurance and umbrella coverage would be adequate. The committee also did an appraisal of the brothers' schools and residences to assure that the province had adequate coverage. Following the recommendation of the Insurance Advisory Committee, the province established a fleet policy for all vehicles owned by the brothers. With the move to small residences and the development of individual apostolates away from the schools, the number of automobiles owned by the brothers had increased to more than 50. Finally, the committee helped the provincial council find which companies offered the best price for the various types of insurance coverage needed throughout the province.

Retirement Plan for Lay Employees

Moved by social justice concerns, the provincial council inaugurated a retirement plan in August of 1981 for all lay employees in the brothers' schools and residences. The plan, designed to supplement Social Security-Medicare benefits, was a defined contribution plan whereby every school and residence set aside quarterly an amount of money equal to 5 percent of each employee's gross wages. Management and investment of these contributions to the plan in every employee's name were confided to Fringe Benefits Administrators, a company in New Orleans specializing in retirement plans. Mr. Richard Watson, company president, worked closely with Brother Lee and the school principals in establishing the plan. The final plan, produced by Roland Hymel and Associates, was selected only after several options were studied and lay employees were surveyed regarding possible benefits. Employees applauded the plan, and principals rejoiced that it encouraged the retention of long-term employees.

Community Ministries and Individual Apostolates

Resolution 18 of the 1979 provincial chapter charged the provincial council to *"investigate new aspects of community ministries in the education and formation of youth . . . and the possibility of a group effort that will identify us with the poor. The findings will be presented at the next chapter."* In June of 1981, Brother Lee wrote to the five bishops of the dioceses where the brothers had schools. The letter to Archbishop Philip Hannan of New Orleans was typical. It asked for *"help in discerning how we brothers might best serve the needs of the Church in your Archdiocese. More specifically, given the limited number of brothers who are currently working at Brother Martin High School, would you prefer that they continue with their work in the school or would you prefer that some of them assist you in service of the Church in the New Orleans area in ministries outside of the schools themselves?"* Archbishop Hannan's immediate response was representative of the other responses: *"I certainly would prefer that the brothers maintain a sufficient number of brothers teaching at Brother Martin High School in order that a proper spirit of discipline and religion be maintained. Brother Martin High School has an enviable record in the Archdiocese and I certainly would like it to continue. It is doing a great work in Christian education."* (Letter of June 23, 1981)

In preparation for the 1982 Provincial Chapter, Brother Lee wrote the chapter delegates informing them that based on his survey of the bishops, the provincial council concluded that *"for the immediate future no additional community commitments be assumed."* (September 27, 1981) His letter delineated the reasons for the decision: the weight of current commitments, the limited number of brothers, the decline in new recruits, and the aging of the brothers themselves.

In that same letter, Brother Lee wrote that the provincial council would *"continue to consider all requests from individual brothers who feel drawn to work outside of our schools."* In 1981-82, Brother Lee's last year as provincial, the number of brothers working in individual apostolates reached its peak with 14 brothers out of a total of 116 professed. Considering that 31 brothers were over 65 years old in 1981, those 14 brothers represented a significant part of the work force. Many of them were still involved in education. Six brothers taught on a college level, and their combined net salaries provided over 15 percent of the remittances to the province.

Some of these brothers in individual apostolates participated in the province committee work related to the schools. For example, Brother Foster Zibilich worked with the principals of the five schools administered by the brothers to design an 80-item questionnaire to survey the students in the brothers' schools. This survey was administered to 3,332 students in 1978. Its purpose, according to Brother Felician Fourrier, Director of Studies, was *"to assist us to learn more about ourselves by seeing how students felt about the school program . . . and to determine to what extent the schools conducted by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart were fulfilling the mandate of the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral `To Teach as Jesus Did.'"* (*Momentum*, December 1978, p. 28) Doctors James Firnberg and Robert Kuhn of LSU's research department were engaged to analyze the results. This student survey brought national attention to the brothers' schools when its findings were published in *Momentum*, the official journal of the National Catholic Educational Association. The student survey was followed by additional surveys of faculties and parents. Results from these surveys assisted school administrators in evaluating the school's mission in term of students' needs and revising school curricula, programs, and policies accordingly.

1982 Provincial Chapter

In a financial report to the chapter, which began on December 27, 1981, Brother Lee informed the brothers that the council again had no plans of

increasing the school assessments for the coming year, even though they had not been increased for the past 12 years. He added that the annual sustenance for each brother, however, would be raised from $3,000 to $3,600 annually. The total operational budget of the province was slightly over $600,000. It included insurance and liability coverage for all community-owned schools and houses; debt retirement; and other province expenses such as spiritual renewals, travel, provincial administration, and recruiting expenses. The province debt stood at more than $500,000. But the retirement of this debt was in sight after 13 years of payments dating back to the bonds issued in 1968 to expand Cor Jesu into Brother Martin High School. Brother Lee reported to the chapter delegates: *"We have two more years beyond this one of payments of $215,000 on our bonded indebtedness (1982 and 1983); then it will drop for two years to $116,000 in 1984 and 1985; then to $59,000 in 1986 before being completely paid off."* (1982 Chapter Report)

Members of the 1982 Provincial Chapter at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis: *Seated:* Brothers Rian Messonnier, Virgil Harris, Eldon Crifasi, Alfred Kolb, Aquin Gauthier, Jean Sobert, Martin Hernandez, Felician Fourrier, Gaspar Rodrigue, and Francis David. *Standing*: Brothers Pierre St. Pierre, Ivy LeBlanc, Mark Thornton, Neal Golden, Joseph Donovan, Ray Hebert, Bernard Couvillion, Xavier Werneth, John Hotstream, Paul Montero, Celestine Algero, Louis Couvillon, Ray Kuhn, Hubert Bonnette, Donnan Berry, Ronald Talbot, Matthias Amos, Ray Houck, Louis Joseph Richard, Paul Mulligan, and Lee Barker

An interesting feature of Brother Lee's financial report was the total amount of tuition assistance that the five schools administered by the brothers were giving to needy families $129,687. An even more remarkable figure was the $800,000 in annual contributed services of the brothers, an amount based on what they could have been paid according to their schools' salary scales, as opposed to what they did receive.

Change of Administration

The provincial chapter elected Brother Xavier Werneth, principal at E. D. White in Thibodaux, and Brother Bernard Couvillion, novice master, as delegates to accompany Brother Lee to the 1982 General Chapter, due to begin in Rome in July. In February 1982, the province at large, through its system of mail-in ballots, elected Brother Xavier the next provincial. Reelected to the council were Brothers Mark Thornton, Lee, and Felician Fourrier. The only newcomer to the council was the first councilor, Brother Ivy LeBlanc, principal of Brother Martin High School. The outgoing provincial council named Brother Paul Montero to replace Brother Xavier as principal in Thibodaux and Brother Lee to replace Brother Paul as vocation director. The new administration took office on August 15.

Throughout his six years as provincial, Brother Lee never wavered from his emphasis on the need for personal prayer and individual renewal. While not trying to impose his own somewhat traditional spirituality on others, he was a prophet of spiritual life and fidelity. He challenged all brothers, particularly the young, to remain faithful to personal prayer and communal exercises. He persistently tried in New Orleans, for example, to organize a 7:15 morning mass in the brothers' chapel at the big house for all the brothers in the small houses.

Brothers saw in Brother Lee a provincial of kindness and compassion, especially for the young people, whom he attracted and welcomed around him, and for the elderly brothers toward whom he was instinctively indulgent. Perhaps Brother Ramon Daunis captured the impressions of the brothers best when he wrote of Brother Lee: *"Kindness, understanding, and personal concern were always foremost in his dealings with the brothers. Yet there was firmness of conviction and compliance with regulations. He was known to go to every possible length to help a brother in trouble, and it was through his leadership that many long-standing problems were appropriately addressed and policies developed to deal with them. He was always warm, kind, concerned, spiritual, and even-tempered, making him always approachable and available."*

CHAPTER 9

BROTHER XAVIER

(1982-1988)

At the age of 39, Brother Xavier Werneth was the youngest brother ever to assume leadership of the province. After teaching 10 years at Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, his first assignment, he became principal in Thibodaux in January 1976, a position he held until elected provincial in 1982.

Brothers perceived Brother Xavier as the right provincial at the right time: a time of adapting and living with the new, accepting change, and making serious efforts at renewal. His initial formation at the Daphne juniorate from 1958-61, his novitiate at Belvidere as a member of the first vow class there, and his scholasticate at Spring Hill College from 1962-65 all gave him a solid training in the old Rule just before the sweeping changes of Vatican II. But during his initial formation, changes were already being discussed; and he was possibly the first provincial to understand at an intuitive, interior level what the Church was asking regarding renewal of religious life. Having participated in the 1982 General Chapter which adopted the new Rule definitively, he appreciated its motivating spirit and articulated it to the brothers, enabling them to understand it and encouraging them to accept it more readily.

At the beginning of his mandate, Brother Xavier invited all the brothers to a special Eucharist of Thanksgiving on August 29, 1982, for the blessings the province received during Brother Lee's administration. After the Mass which was celebrated in the mall at Brother Martin High School, he publicly thanked Brother Lee. Before the reception and meal that followed, there was a brief commissioning ceremony for the new provincial administration. About 70 brothers participated in the ceremonies planned and carried out in coordination with the Spiritual Life Committee.

Frequent Communication

In his first letter to the brothers, Brother Xavier wrote, *"It is my intention to communicate with you frequently by means of a short newsletter such as this one with current news items and to write circulars on a particular topic whenever the need arises."* (Newsletter, 1:1) His one-page newsletters, always on distinctive blue paper, usually reported about 10 news items, each one very succinctly written with busy brothers in mind. These newsletters, published almost weekly for six years, took the pulse of province life. They not only informed the province about brothers' accomplishments, committee projects, the sick, and provincial council concerns, but were also used to motivate, thank, encourage, and inspire brothers to take just pride in the achievements of each other and the province. Each month along with the newsletter, brothers received a province activities calendar listing their birthdays, anniversaries of brothers' deaths, the provincial's visitation schedule, and important province meetings and events.

Also every month or so, Brother Xavier wrote a circular on a particular topic relevant to a feast of the Institute, the death of a brother, or an issue in the life of the province. Brothers frequently expressed their appreciation for these letters which motivated him to continue writing. Most of his circulars explained some aspect of the new Rule which he fully endorsed and realistically applied to everyday living.

Presenting the Rule of Life

In his first circular, *Called to Love,* issued on Foundation Day in 1982, Brother Xavier announced: *"It is with great joy and excitement that we receive our new Rule of Life dated September 30, 1982. . . . Years of hard work, experimentation, prayer, study, consultation, and discussion went into our new rule. It is indeed a beautiful document, `an effective guide to union with God and with our Brothers in Christ.' (Rule 4)"*

Realizing that some brothers resisted the new Rule because they thought it to be too general, he explained in his second circular, *Called to Holiness,* issued on All Saints Day, 1982, that the Province Directory, having been approved by Rome, formed an integral part of the Rule and promulgated specific provincial chapter regulations for applying the Rule on a day-to-day basis. When the Directory was reprinted in 1985, articles were reorganized with clear references to the Rule.

On December 27, 1983, the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes officially approved the new Rule. The general administration entrusted its publication in English to the three American provincials. They commissioned Brothers Bernard Couvillion and Robert Breault (NE) to work on an official English translation. The provincials determined to make frequent references to the Rule in their circulars to familiarize the brothers with it. They also required every brother to participate in one of several interprovince Rule of Life retreats. A team consisting of Brothers Bernard Couvillion (NO), Ronald Dupuis (NE), and Francis Corradi (NY) gave a series of five retreats on the Rule in the three United States provinces and one in England in 1984. In 1987 each province offered a follow-up retreat.

Brothers responded favorably to the Rule retreats. In a written evaluation, they made comments such as, *"This was excellent, restful, inspiring, instructional. I learned a lot about the Rule. I have new insights now."* Another representative comment was, *"I grew in appreciation and love of the Rule of Life. I can say with greater conviction now that I am proud to be a Brother of the Sacred Heart."* One brother wrote, *"Life-giving, a breath of fresh air. The Rule is really inspired. I'm glad the retreat was mandatory. I'm exhilarated."* (Easter Report to the Province, April 5, 1985)

Poverty and Province Finances

Following its discussions on poverty, the chapter of 1982 determined that to help brothers live a simple lifestyle, all of them should become more involved in the finances of their local community. (Minutes, RS 29) Consequently, the provincial council replaced the old system of sustenance whereby local communities received a set amount for each brother. For the 1981-82 fiscal year, $3,500 had been allotted for each brother. But for the coming year, the council introduced a budget process which required each local community to discern its financial needs. To facilitate the process, Brother Xavier worked with Brother Mark Thornton, province treasurer, and Brother Martin Hernandez, province bookkeeper, to simplify the complicated chart of accounts and to streamline the houses' quarterly financial reports to a one-page format.

The chapter also determined that as the province paid off its debt, the council should lower school assessments paid to the province (RS 30) so that the schools could increase financial aid to needy students. (RS 17) The council's plans to implement these two resolutions impressed authorities in Rome. When the superior general, Brother Jean-Charles Daigneault, along with two general councilors, Brothers Marcel Riviere and Jean Roure, visited the province in

October of 1983, they noted that the New Orleans Province was one of the few making such extensive efforts to aid needy students.

Province charity included international projects as well as local ones. To help less-favored parts of the Institute, the provincial council presented the superior general with a check for $100,000. The council also contributed generously to support various local projects such as the Family Self-Help Program directed by Brother Collin Dugas. Living in an apartment with two Christian Brothers in the St. Thomas Housing Project in New Orleans, Brother Collin worked full-time among the poor in the neighborhood.

At its meeting on December 7, 1983, the provincial council, foresaw the happy occasion when in 1986 it would totally pay off its bonded indebtedness. For 1984 and 1985, payment on this debt would be reduced to only $117,402. This represented a tremendous relief from financial obligation. Thus, the council reduced the 1984-85 assessment of province-owned schools by a total of $100,000 from $405,000 to $305,000. In turn, the schools increased assistance to needy students as the chart below illustrates. The chart also shows the increase in tuition due to inflation and lay teachers' salaries. From 1982 to 1987, the number of brothers working in the six schools listed decreased from 80 to 63. Of the 63 brothers, only 49 worked full-time. Lay employees increased from 291 to 329.

SCHOOL:	BMHS	CHS	EDW	MGT	SSC	VCHS
1982 Brothers	28	11	4	4	27	6
1987 Brothers	**20**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**23**	**6**
1982 Lay Faculty	63	31	33	75	25	57
1987 Lay Faculty	**71**	**38**	**36**	**84**	**41**	**36**
1982 Lay Staff	20	15	3	17	30	14
1987 Lay Staff	**33**	**19**	**4**	**18**	**40**	**11**
1982 Enrollment	1,360	650	635	1,240	590	800
1987 Enrollment	**1,443**	**633**	**577**	**1,207**	**570**	**606**
1982 Tuition	$ 1,550	1,535	1,150	1,125	950	1,250
1987 Tuition	**$ 2,200**	**2,250**	**1,740**	**1,550**	**1,350**	**1,800**
1982 Assistance	$46,624	18,00	29,585		31,448	24,000
1987 Assistance	**$100,969**	**30,000**	**65,750**	**100,000**	**90,029**	**47,200**

Participatory Leadership

Brother Xavier's participatory leadership style and skill at consensus building inspired confidence and trust. He was respected by the brothers as a man of vision and vitality, and he enjoyed their cooperation. Because Brother Xavier was able to accept resistance and opposition calmly without taking things personally, brothers felt freer to express themselves openly and to listen to others more respectfully. As provincial, he frequently brought in resource persons and skilled facilitators to help the brothers discuss controversial topics. He especially called upon several Sisters of St. Joseph who had been professionally trained as facilitators, specializing in group planning for religious communities. He encouraged brothers to bring their faith to bear in deciding important issues, using processes of communal discernment in a prayerful atmosphere.

"The leadership style in vogue today," Brother Xavier wrote the brothers, *"is one of collegiality calling for much more communication, consensus, and delegation rather than handing down decisions already made."* (Circular, October 16, 1984) As provincial, he spent many a weekend participating in province committee meetings, serving as liaison and coordinator between the committee and provincial council. He carefully avoided manipulating decisions, respecting the committee process as well as the interrelationship of committees with the council. In addition to their many good works, committees developed leadership among their members and assured ownership of the various projects undertaken, thus providing a wide base of support and participation. At the annual Easter gatherings, committee chairmen reported as part of the state-of-the-province address usually presented by the provincial.

Committees became such a dynamic force of growth in the province during the 1980's that the history of the province during this time is basically the story of the development of six or seven very active province committees and their projects. In addition to the permanent committees which consisted of five to 10 brothers each and which usually met three to five times a year, the provincial council named *ad hoc* committees as the need arose. For example, the council established special task forces to study housing of the brothers in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, a search committee to find a mission project, an *ad hoc* committee on aging and the care of infirm brothers, and another one to prepare a pastoral guide for the schools.

Educational Mission and Ministry

In November of 1983, Brother Xavier met with an *ad hoc* committee composed of Brothers Bernard Couvillion, chairman, John Hotstream, Matthias Amos, and Ronald Talbot. This committee's task, according to the 1982 Provincial Chapter was to prepare a pastoral guide for the schools: *"to provide a tool through which the educational spirit and values of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in our province can be described and passed on to increasingly lay-dominated schools, to newly-hired teachers, and to brothers in formation."* (Minutes, RS 28) The committee conducted a wide consultation among the brothers and put together the first draft of *Educational Mission and Ministry* which described ways of putting into practice the brothers' educational charism. The subsequent provincial chapter in 1984 unanimously endorsed the revised draft as a working statement. The chapter then commissioned the Principals' Committee to undertake printing, distribution, implementation, and future revisions of the document.

Educational Mission and Ministry came out just at the right time for the principals. Since 1982, the Principals' Committee had been meeting on a regular basis at different schools to discuss topics of mutual concern. For example, the principals and the provincial met at Brother Martin High School in April 1983 *"to discuss the greater involvement of lay personnel in our schools and developing a missionary attitude in our schools by projects such as adopting another school in a mission area through financial and other forms."* (Newsletter, 1:27) After the 1984 Provincial Chapter, the principals had *Educational Mission and Ministry* professionally printed in a loose-leaf format for inclusion in faculty handbooks at each school. But more importantly, during the 1985-86 school year, six principals Brothers Francis David, Ivy LeBlanc, Celestine Algero, Paul Montero, Foster Zibilich, and Eldon Crifasi along with the provincial planned and presented an in-service day for faculties of each school. The principals' presentations had an immediate and powerful impact upon their faculties, and the content and vision of the document they presented would shape their schools for the next 10 years and beyond.

As a follow-up to the 1985-86 presentations, the Principals' Committee sponsored a series of six round-table discussions based on *Educational Mission and Ministry*. During 1986-87, the principals brought together key people from the different schools to discuss ways to implement the document. These meetings included academic assistants, deans of students, religion department heads, athletic directors, guidance counselors, and librarians. Participants shared not just theories of the brothers' educational philosophy but practical applications

of it. Some groups found the discussions so worthwhile that they scheduled additional meetings. In October 1987, the directors of public relations and of student activities asked the principals to conduct sessions for them.

Members of the 1986-87 Principals' Committee before one of their series of six discussions: *Front*: Brothers Eldon Crifasi, Paul Montero, and Ronald Talbot; *Back*: Brothers Ray Hebert, Foster Zibilich, Ivy LeBlanc, and Francis David

In 1988, at the request of the provincial council, the Principals' Committee began working on an instrument to evaluate school administrations based on the principles in *Educational Mission and Ministry*. Other topics addressed by the committee included such sensitive issues as physical and sexual abuse. Principals saw the need to have definite policies in place on these issues. They wanted policies that would not merely meet legal requirements but that would reflect pastoral and spiritual dimensions of ministry in the brothers' schools. At their meeting on March 24, 1988, the principals addressed the need to educate faculty, students, and especially parents on AIDS and to involve them in formulating policy statements.

Reorganization and Re-election

Besides his involvement with various province committees, Brother Xavier found time to reorganize the provincial office. He brought to the task his organizational ability and an appreciation for history. He used these gifts to update legal documents and preserve some of the province's records. For

example, he had brothers rewrite and update their last wills. Province policies concerning brothers' patrimony were drawn up by the council and explained to the brothers. Legal documents granting the provincial power of attorney to make health care decisions for brothers unable to do so and to oversee brothers' funerals and burials were signed and notarized. Boxes of archival materials from the time the provincial residence was moved from Daphne were sorted and properly stored. Filing cabinets were reorganized. Hundreds of old photos of schools and brothers were put into albums for safe keeping. New photos of each brother were collected to complete the files. Computers replaced typewriters in the provincial's and secretary's offices. Records of deceased and departed brothers and candidates were all computerized.

In 1985, the province re-elected Brother Xavier for another three years. The *Annuaire* chronicle reported: *"Coming as no surprise to the province was the re-election of Brother Xavier as provincial. His innovative technique and straightforward qualities of leadership were everywhere in evidence. Chosen by the province to assist him as councilors were Brothers Ivy LeBlanc, Lee Barker, Mark Thornton, and Bernard Couvillion."* (*Annuaire*, 79:57) Eighty brothers attended a Mass of Thanksgiving, August 25, 1985, in the mall at Brother Martin High School. Ceremonies afterwards included a brief recognition of outgoing provincial administrators and the installation of newly elected provincial administrators. Brother Felician Fourrier, who ended a long tenure on the council, received a plaque which read: *"Your ready wit, vast knowledge, and practical wisdom have enlivened and enlightened the council meetings of six different provincials during your nine terms and twenty-three years on the council."*

Canonical Visitation

After Brother Marcel Riviere, assistant general, made an official visitation of the province in March and April 1986, he praised and challenged the province. He reported that he was very favorably impressed by *"the provincial leadership, the new developments in the apostolate, the good spirit of the Brothers, and the health of the Brothers."* He went on to add that *"the leadership structures are the reason for the good state of the province, the growth taking place. The provincial has excellent leadership qualities and is uniting the Brothers in the process of leading them."* (Report, May 29, 1986) Brother Marcel cited the effectiveness of the committees as a leadership structure responsible for many of the good things taking place in the province. He praised the province for giving attention to the selection and preparation of local directors, but he also challenged directors to

give the role top priority and to guard against becoming overworked by their own choice. He exhorted the province to improve the quality of community prayer life and traditional retreats. Finally, he encouraged authorities to continue addressing issues of aging.

Province Committees Expand

As an outcome of a special session with Brother Loughlan Sofield, ST, in January 1987, local directors formed themselves into a Directors' Committee to help carry out their task as animators. They decided to meet twice annually in addition to their January workshop. They invited Sister Janet Franklin, CSJ, Vicar for Religious in New Orleans, to facilitate their initial meeting, August 22, 1987, at which they discussed expectations placed on them, some challenging aspects of their role, and practical ways of dealing with difficult situations. For their next meeting in February, Brother Ronald Talbot, first chairman of the committee, invited Sister Mary Ann Farris, CSJ, to facilitate a discussion on the directors' role in view of mandates from the 1988 Provincial Chapter. This led to an April meeting to work on the format and content of initial house meetings as called for by the chapter. The Directors' Committee was becoming a dynamic force for animation and unity in the province.

Another group in the province, the ordained brothers, also began meeting regularly. Brother Fernand Raymond, a general councilor working on a study of the priesthood in the Institute, accepted an invitation from the provincial to meet with the ordained brothers at Bay St. Louis on November 15, 1983. At the time there were six ordained brothers in the province: Brothers Farrel Lorio, Albert Guarino, Will McCue, Carl Evans, Ray Hebert, and Vincent Bono. Brother Geoffrey Kerwin was back in Africa working in Lesotho. It became clear from the confusion and frustration expressed at the meeting that the ordained brothers needed time together to reflect on their common experience.

Soon afterwards, Brothers Brian Curry and Leo Labbe, provincials of New York and New England, teamed up with the New Orleans provincial to sponsor a tri-province gathering of ordained brothers. From June 9-11, 1986, at the Dominican Conference Center in New Orleans, Sister Joan LaPlace, CSJ, facilitated a discussion with 12 ordained brothers and the three provincials. During the two-day conference, she helped the ordained brothers discuss major issues affecting their lives and work, share their joys and frustrations, clarify their role, and determine some directions for the future. The ordained brothers decided to meet again the following year as a support group and then every other year as necessary. They set up a clearinghouse to share materials and

named a task force to draft a group reflection on the role of the ordained brother.

The ordained brothers in New Orleans began meeting regularly as a committee in 1986 with Brother Will McCue as chairman. They discussed how they could improve their service to the brothers. At one such meeting, the Rev. Bryan Gray, liturgist, critiqued video tapes of their masses to help them improve their manner of presiding at the eucharistic liturgy. At these meetings, the provincial challenged the ordained brothers to take more active leadership role in the spiritual development of their local communities and to incorporate the Rule of Life much more into their homilies.

Another province committee, the Vocation Committee, chaired by Brother Lee Barker, expanded its Associate Program and involved as many brothers as possible in vocation work. For example, 28 brothers took part in the committee's Associate Retreat in 1984. Numbers joining the community, however, remained small. Eleven candidates entered the prenovitiate between 1982 and 1988. Six of them became novices; only four made vows. During that same period, eight brothers died and three left, so the number of brothers in the province declined from 116 to 109.

The 1984 Provincial Chapter decided that the province should have *"a vocation team consisting of at least two full-time brothers"* (RS 14) to give more attention to young men on college campuses as well as to the upper classmen in high schools directed by the brothers. The council assigned Brother Paul Mulligan to work with Brother Lee. Also the chapter made it very clear that every brother shared responsibility for recruiting and vocation work. It resolved that *"each local community and individual brother annually set specific goals for recruiting and vocation work and the means for implementing those goals following guidelines established by the provincial in council."* (RS 23) The council asked each house to submit its annual plans for approval. These usually included praying for vocations, inviting young men to meals at the brothers' houses, and hosting associate gatherings.

Projects of Animation

The Spiritual Life Committee continued to be a driving force in the animation of the province and took on additional responsibilities at the provincial's request. The committee planned and sponsored annual province days of prayer during Advent and Lent. Usually 25 to 40 brothers attended these days of recollection at various retreat houses. Also the committee began working with the retreats at Bay St. Louis as well as those at the Abbey

Christian Life Center in St. Benedict, Louisiana. It also conducted a very thorough retreat survey in 1986-87 to help the provincial council respond to the brothers' needs regarding province retreats. As one outcome of the survey, the committee sponsored an Ignatian-directed retreat in a communal setting in 1988.

Under the creative leadership of Brother Adrian Gaudin, the committee found new ways to keep the annual Easter Reunions from becoming too routine. These gatherings remained a major event in the life of the province, a time to come together for the Easter liturgies, to celebrate jubilees, and to discuss province matters. Besides the Easter reunions, one of the major responsibilities of the Spiritual Life Committee was an annual weekend workshop for directors and province leaders. Some of the themes of these workshops included: *Liturgy of the Hours, Ongoing Formation, Spiritual Leadership, Conflict Resolution,* and *Liturgical Growth*. Some were open to all the brothers, and more than 40 percent of the province attended the workshop given by Brother Loughlan Sofield, ST, January 16-18, 1987, on *Communicating in Community*.

Ongoing Formation

Traditionally the Formation Committee had focused on initial rather than ongoing formation. And since the establishment of the combined novitiate in 1981, the committee had been collaborating with formation personnel in the other two American provinces to unify the three provinces' other initial formation programs: the prenovitiate and the postnovitiate. But at this time with the Spiritual Life Committee handling all that it possibly could, Brother Xavier looked to the Formation Committee for help with ongoing formation. At first the provincial found the Formation Committee somewhat slow to respond to his request. But in early 1987, after deliberation for more than a year, the committee, chaired by Brother Raymond Houck, presented the provincial council a proposal of a bold new project for ongoing formation designed to reach all the brothers.

The proposed project centered on the liturgical life of the province and aimed to bring the brothers closer together in their perception and practice of liturgy, including the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. It was a good choice, especially in view of the fact that past provincial chapters had called for an ongoing program to help the brothers better understand and appreciate the Liturgy of the Hours. The provincial council enthusiastically endorsed the project and asked the Formation Committee to involve the Ordained Brothers' Committee.

The province-wide program included several phases of implementation. The Formation Committee collaborated with the Spiritual Life Committee in the preparatory stages, making use of the Directors' Workshop as a training session for local directors. After a general orientation and explanation of the program at the workshop, committee members launched Phase One, a series of two meetings. At these meeting throughout the province, committee members invited brothers to share their lived experiences concerning liturgy. Phase Two at the Easter Reunion gave brothers opportunity to offer feedback and to hear Father Carl Dehne, SJ, a liturgist, explain spiritually enriching liturgy from the Church's viewpoint. Finally, Phase Three called for additional house meetings for the brothers to decide how to incorporate the vision of the Church and the Rule into the daily liturgical prayer of their local communities.

National Involvements

During the '80s, brothers in the New Orleans province became increasingly involved in national organizations of religious life and educational ministry. Several brothers took leadership roles in the National Assembly of Religious Brothers. Brother Adrian Gaudin was elected its president in 1983 and Brothers Alfred Rodriguez, Aquin Gauthier, and Paul Montero also served as national officers in the '80s. These brothers got actively involved in hosting the annual conferences and NARB retreats. From 1981 to 1990, Brother Adrian, as editor of *Brothers*, the official newspaper for NARB, kept brothers throughout the country in touch with the latest religious life issues. Also during the '80s, brothers in formation ministry in the province moved beyond the regional level to participate in the National Religious Formation Conference. As a member of its executive board, Brother Raymond Houck planned national assemblies and programs for men and women religious preparing for final vows.

While provincial, Brother Xavier served on the Religious Life and Ministry Committee of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. In 1986 he was elected to the national board of CMSM, serving as its treasurer and a member of the executive committee. As such, he attended the 1987 National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C., during which the bishops established a Tri-Conference Committee composed of bishops and men and women religious and voted favorably for a 10-year national collection for retired religious.

Several brothers, especially Brothers Donnan Berry and Neal Golden, influenced the national educational scene during the '80s. From 1983 to 1986, Brother Donnan presided over the Secondary School Division of the National

Catholic Educational Association and served on the executive committee of the NCEA. In 1985, he was appointed chairman of the Nonpublic Schools Committee of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Brother Neal, whose algebra and computer textbooks were being used in school systems throughout the country, was appointed in 1983 to a Technology Advisory Committee by the National Council of Teachers of Math. He also served a three-year term starting in 1985 on the Mathematical Sciences Educational Board of the National Research Council in Washington, D.C.

Vision for the Future

"To discuss the future and the necessity of change can cause a certain degree of anxiety and insecurity," Brother Xavier wrote the brothers in May 1987. *"But not to discuss and plan for the future,"* he reasoned, *"is much more unsettling because then we are forced only to react and may not be able to shape situations to our best advantage. Faith in the future is the most reasonable attitude for a religious who realizes the work we do is not ours, but God's, and he will lead us."* (Newsletter, 5:24) With that introduction, he announced two very important and potentially controversial projects in the province: the introduction of lay prefects at St. Stanislaus and a study of housing changes in New Orleans.

On May 6, 1987, the provincial council named Brother Ivy LeBlanc chairman of a Housing Task Force consisting of the local directors in New Orleans. Its primary purpose was to study housing of the brothers in the city and to provide the provincial council with recommendations for immediate and long-range planning. All brothers were invited to take part: *"Discussion of our housing needs is open to all brothers and should take place in an open, non-threatening, and fraternal way. There is no sense of urgency. But it is only through such free discussion and careful planning that we can provide for our present and future needs most effectively, basing decisions on factors that contribute to the quality of religious life and avoiding situations that might cause us to act primarily out of expediency."* (Newsletter, 5:24)

In September 1987, Sister Lucy Silvio, CSJ, of the New Orleans Archdiocesan Spirituality Center, facilitated a meeting of all the brothers in New Orleans. *"With a spirit of communal discernment characterized by fraternal charity and a deep sense of unity, the brothers had an excellent meeting in which they shared their feelings concerning housing in the city, listened respectfully to the feelings of others, and began discussing community housing needs in view of the general proposals drawn up by the Task Force on Housing."* (Newsletter, 6:6) Brother Ivy sent a summary of the meeting to each

brother and invited reactions. At a second general meeting in New Orleans, November 1, Sister Mary Ann Farris, CSJ, facilitated discussions. After this thorough consultation process, the task force recommended that the brothers be housed according to their various ministries.

Mission in Montgomery

One of the most significant achievements of the province during Brother Xavier's term was the implementation of RS 46 of the 1984 Provincial Chapter. The resolution delegated the provincial *"to call a meeting of brothers interested in volunteering for home or foreign missionary endeavors with the object of determining a direction for a province apostolic undertaking."* Thirty brothers participated in the first mission meeting on March 2, 1985, in New Orleans. Reports from six small groups at the meeting were sent to each house for further discussion. An *ad hoc* committee consisting of Brothers Matthias Amos, chairman, Alfred Rodriguez, Francis Fleming, Ray Kuhn, and William Boyles condensed the reports into a consensus statement as a starting point for a second province meeting.

As a result of the brothers' communal discernment, the provincial council began plans to implement a home mission project. From among 16 brothers who volunteered to serve on the project, the council named Brothers Matthias Amos and Ronald Talbot to a search committee chaired by the provincial. The council charged them to present it with several possible projects according to criteria discerned by the province.

After preliminary investigation, the search committee visited four schools in poor areas of Alabama and Mississippi. Members met with principals, pastors, superintendents, and associates. After listening to a full report made by the committee on December 4, the provincial council decided to adopt as a home mission St. John the Baptist, an all-black inner city elementary school in Montgomery. The process of communal discernment and collaborative decision-making gave the project a wide base of support among the brothers and went a long way to unify them in regard to the province's service to the poor, a topic that had long polarized the province.

Making Peace with the Past

During his interviews with the older brothers, Brother Xavier, as provincial, listened to them with great respect and tried to help them put the past into perspective, to let go of hurts, and to accept the present peacefully.

According to Brother Bernard Couvillion, he *"respected the history of the province and its traditions without divinizing them and initiated projects that reflected his love of the province. Two significant ones honoring deceased brothers were the publication of* Lives of the Brothers *and the renovation of the province's cemeteries."*

"It is hoped that Lives of the Brothers," Brother Xavier wrote in its foreword, *"will help us to celebrate our past. It is intended to be a commemoration of the ministry, the spirit, and the personalities of the brothers who have gone before us . . . to keep alive their memories, to help us remember. It is written for us, to animate our lives, for if we forget the brothers who have died, we die as a community."* Publication of this book, along with the *Life of Father André Coindre,* an English translation by Brother Jerome Lepre of an 1888 biography, coincided with the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Institute's founder.

Renovation at four cemeteries was another project honoring the deceased brothers. At the brothers' main cemetery in Bay St. Louis, the ground was leveled; then the tombstone crosses were straightened, scrubbed, and painted white. A statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from the scholasticate at Spring Hill was erected. At its base was placed a plaque listing the names and burial places of 92 brothers from the province buried elsewhere. The cemetery was extended 25 feet, enclosed with a black wrought-iron fence, and equipped with an underground sprinkler system. At the Catholic Cemetery in Mobile, the brothers' plot where 36 brothers are buried was renovated by painting and leveling the crosses as at the Bay. In Natchez, old broken headstones around the large marble stone commemorating the 11 brothers buried in the brothers' plot on Catholic Hill were replaced by the characteristic concrete crosses made by the brothers. And in Indianapolis, new granite headstones replaced the old illegible sandstone markers of the eight brothers buried at Holy Cross Cemetery. Most of the work in the cemeteries was done by volunteers, especially Brothers Hilbert Mooney, Loyola Mattingly, and Matthias Amos who recruited help from the Key Club in Mobile.

Facing Questions of Aging

To assure that the province was meeting the needs of its elderly, sick, and infirm brothers, the provincial council, at its meeting on June 7, 1986, appointed an *ad hoc* Committee on Aging. The council asked the committee to consult the brothers and to make recommendations on how best to prepare for future needs in view of certain realities: limited province resources, the average age of the

brothers which was slightly over 55, and the community's ministerial commitments. Chaired by Brother Bernard Couvillion, the committee included Brothers Mark Thornton, Raymond Houck, and Albert Ledet.

Taking a professional yet sensitive approach to the topic, the committee worked carefully and calmly, creating a positive atmosphere of free and open discussion of the touchy topic. Within the first year, committee members interviewed 25 brothers randomly selected by age brackets. Based on their reactions and suggestions, the committee revised the first draft of its report. The committee's working process was educational in itself and did much to raise the level of consciousness of the brothers regarding aging. On November 15, 1987, the committee presented the provincial council a thorough report which drew from four basic sources: policy statements and documents from other religious congregations, a survey to which about 100 brothers in the province responded, discussions of the brothers' personal experiences and perceptions, and a national workshop on gerontology attended by two committee members. This report was shared with all the brothers for reactions before the 1987 chapter.

After the chapter's endorsement, the council named Brother Aquin Gauthier in March 1988 to chair a committee composed of public relations personnel in the brothers' schools to print the report in a readable and appealing format. The committee published an attractive booklet entitled *Wisdom, Age, and Grace*. This document of province policies on aging and retirement, as well as the positive process that produced it, helped brothers to come to grips with their aging.

Steps Toward Refoundation

During Brother Xavier's second term, the provincial council grew beyond a governing body to become a force for animation and refoundation in the province. In November 1986, taking advantage of the practice of monthly business meetings introduced during Brother Xavier's first term, the council began allocating time specifically to develop its vision. After the council's two-day stay at St. Joseph Abbey in St. Benedict, Louisiana, Brother Xavier reported: *"The quiet, reflective atmosphere lent itself to our discussions. We shared our feelings about the present state of the province which were very good overall. We also discussed various aspects of Brother Marcel's visitation report, processes for surfacing needs, the local community, the role of the directors, our vision for the next two years, and the working of the council."* (Newsletter, 5:3)

Two pre-chapter meetings of the province focused the theme of the 1987 Provincial Chapter: *"Refoundation of community life in the province based on the*

common vision in the Rule of Life: praying together, working together, living together, and aging together." The provincial council, rather than organizing the chapter itself as was the custom, created a Ways and Means Committee consisting of Brothers Francis David, chairman, Donnan Berry, Neal Golden, and the provincial. The December chapter took on a new format with several firsts: *"two pre-chapter meetings of all delegates, five regional meetings, the special liturgies prepared by a Liturgy Committee, the use of an outside facilitator, a sharper focus on a theme and objectives, a different use of the facilities at SSC."* (Newsletter, 6:16) The provincial presided over the chapter, but Sister Joan LaPlace, CSJ, facilitated its discussions. Finally, in sending the chapter minutes to each brother, Brother Xavier asked, *"Please read them carefully in preparation for a house meeting during the course of my visitation at which a team consisting of several chapter delegates and participants will share the spirit and motivation of the chapter with you . . . and our hopes for the future in implementing the goals of refoundation over the next three years."* (Newsletter, 6:16)

Elections and Transitions

The provincial chapter elected Brothers Bernard Couvillion, director of novices, and Ivy LeBlanc, principal of Brother Martin High School, to accompany the provincial to the general chapter scheduled to begin June 15, 1988, in Rome at the Christian Brothers' Generalate. Not long after the provincial chapter, the brothers elected Brother Bernard as next provincial with a council of Brothers Xavier, Ivy, Matthias Amos, and Lee Barker. The general chapter, however, elected Brother Xavier as general councilor to replace Brother Marcel Riviere, who had served 18 years in Rome. Brother Paul Montero then became the fourth member of the provincial council. The council named Brother Marcel as director at St. Stanislaus and Brother Louis Couvillon as director of novices.

On August 28, 1988, the brothers gathered in New Orleans to celebrate a Eucharist of Thanksgiving for the province's many blessings. The new provincial administration which had taken office on August 15 participated in a commissioning prayer service. The brothers then honored Brother Mark, who completed 30 years in administration as councilor and provincial; they also thanked Brother Warren Laudumiey, provincial secretary for the past 12 years; and Brother Xavier, the outgoing provincial.

Brother Jean-Charles Daigneault, superior general, also thanked and praised Brother Xavier, the outgoing provincial: *"I have to express my sincerest satisfaction with the way you have animated and administered your province."* (Letter, February 26, 1988) The superior general said that he was struck by

Brother Xavier's sense of history, using the brothers' rich tradition as a source for growth; by his attention to his brothers, enabling them to discover their personal worth and increase their self-giving; and finally by his intelligent and efficient action, leading to major accomplishments. Brother Jean-Charles especially lauded: *"the home mission project of Montgomery, the Educational Mission and Ministry project, the Committee on Aging project, and finally the refoundation of community life and apostolate project."* He also expressed his satisfaction with Brother Xavier's efforts to increase collaboration among the three United States provinces. Such collaboration led the province beyond the combined novitiate and Belvidere renewal sessions to include leadership meetings and renewal sessions in Africa, Rule retreats and their follow-ups, interprovince personnel assignments, interprovince meetings of ordained brothers and vocation personnel, and summer renewal programs in New Hampshire open to all men religious.

CHAPTER 10

BROTHER BERNARD

(1988-1994)

Bernard Couvillion was well prepared to serve as provincial. For years, he had totally committed his spiritual and personal energies to the process of renewal and communal refoundation as mandated by provincial and general chapters. In fact, he had been one of the inspirations for such movements, not only within the province, but throughout the Institute.

His worldwide experience provided him with a good perception of the goals of the congregation and the needs of the brothers in the wider community. He had represented the New Orleans province at three general chapters in Rome, those of 1976, 1982, and 1988. Had he not been provincial-elect at the time of the 1988 General Chapter, he would have accepted his election to serve as a general councilor. In 1979, he served on a special international commission to work on the new Rule of Life. After its adoption in 1982, he gave Rule workshops and retreats to brothers in Africa, England, and Australia, as well as in the three US provinces. He also played a key role on the international commission to prepare a Formation Guide for the Institute.

Long involved in formation work in the province, Brother Bernard served as director of the prenovitiate and post-novitiate and as a staff member of the US combined novitiate team since its establishment in 1981. From 1984 until his election as provincial, he was director of novices. Besides his work in formation, he was active in other areas of province life. His creative leadership found a natural outlet in various projects of the Spiritual Life Committee, which he chaired for many years. He also chaired some of the key *ad hoc* committees in the province, such as the one that drafted a pastoral guide for the schools and the one that prepared province policies on aging. He served one term as provincial councilor during which time the role of the council began to emerge as one of animation as well as administration.

Brother Bernard took office as provincial on August 15, 1988, at 4540 Elysian Fields in New Orleans, not at 204 Hancock Street in Bay St. Louis where the provincial residence and office had been for the previous 18 years. The New Orleans Housing Task Force had determined that the residence at 4540 was too small for a local community; and Brother Bernard, as provincial-elect, saw the convenience of relocating the provincial office in New Orleans. At the same time, the vocation office moved from the small building adjoining the 4601 residence on Elysian Fields to the new provincial headquarters. Brother Bernard hired a professional secretary, Mrs. Brenda DiGiovanni, to work on a regular basis for the two offices. He took up residence at the newly formed hospitality community on Painters Street.

Refounding Local Communities

One of the major thrusts of the 1988 Provincial Chapter aimed at refoundation of local communities. Recommendations made by the New Orleans Housing Task Force to group brothers according to common ministry fit in well with this movement. Thus, the provincial council established six local communities for 1988-89 in New Orleans: the interprovince novitiate at 1156 City Park Avenue, the prenovitiate at 1920 Robert E. Lee Blvd., the large residence for elderly and retired brothers at 4601 Elysian Fields Ave., a community of teaching brothers at 2150 Brutus St., and two special communities. One special community had hospitality as its common ministry with an emphasis on recruiting. The province re-purchased the house at 4671 Painters Street which had been sold in 1984. Its spaciousness provided the hospitality community with the opportunity to invite young men to visit the house for prayers and meals. At the 1930 Robert E. Lee Blvd. residence, the council established another experimental community, one composed of brothers working in diverse apostolates.

Encouraged by the success of the Housing Task Force in New Orleans, the provincial council set up similar task forces in Baton Rouge and Bay St. Louis in 1988. The council asked them to study how to improve the quality of the brothers' religious lives together by adjusting their living situations. The Baton Rouge task force, under the leadership of Brothers Carl Bouchereau, Donnan Berry, and Francis David effected several important changes. The two local communities merged in 1989, and the Avondale St. residence was sold. The brothers renovated their residence adjoining the school on Hearthstone Drive to provide a downstairs community room, external access to the chapel, and a reception room for visitors. Bay St. Louis posed a more difficult situation. Discussions got sidetracked into

unresolved issues facing the house council and the school board. Work became so hopelessly bogged down that the council suspended the task force in 1989. A final report from the task force following its sixth meeting, October 1, 1989, did address important issues of health care for the sick and led to several improvements in that area. Larger issues of refoundation would be taken up on an ongoing basis by the house council; the question of living arrangements in scattered quarters would wait for another task force to grapple with six years later.

In keeping with the spirit of community renewal, a revised Belvidere summer program, beginning with *The Summer of '89* session, emphasized communal aspects of refoundation. Brother Bernard participated in the program that summer with three members of his provincial council, and he encouraged brothers from local communities to make the renewal program together. During the summers that followed, brothers from Houma, Thibodaux, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge made the Belvidere sessions together to reflect on practical goals for refoundation in their local communities.

Continuing the practice begun by Brother Xavier Werneth of publishing frequent provincial newsletters on blue paper, Brother Bernard introduced each issue with a brief personal message addressed to the brothers to promote province goals, especially those of communal refoundation. For example, in a newsletter accompanying the 1989 assignment list, Brother Bernard reminded the brothers: *"Implicit in this list is the assignment to each brother to build up our communities. May the publication of these assignments remind us of our provincial chapter's goal of refounding our local communities on the Rule of Life. Article 27 asks us to direct our apostolic concern first of all toward making our own community dynamic. Article 103 asks us to become loving servants of one another. By serving and supporting one another in our community life we enable one another to go out as a team to accomplish our apostolic mission."* (Newsletter, 7:20)

Team Visits and Ministry

Team ministry remained a constant theme of Brother Bernard, and he assured that the provincial council set an example of teamwork. Periodically the council, rather than the provincial alone, published circular letters on important topics. Much discussion and consultation often preceded these letters, especially if they touched on sensitive topics such as physical and sexual abuse or if they promulgated province policy such as that on casino gambling. In another innovative approach to team ministry, Brother Bernard and his council initiated

team visits to local communities. He explained in a newsletter: *"The recent provincial chapter asked members of the council to visit each house as a team in connection with the provincial's second visit of the school year. Just as the purpose of the provincial's visit is to ask how each brother is doing, the purpose of the team visit will be to ask each local community how it is doing as a community in light of the chapter's goal of refounding our communities. The council will work closely with the directors in planning its team visit."* (Newsletter, 7:6)

These team visits successfully fostered zeal and enthusiasm for refounding local communities, in evaluating community life, and in involving the council in goal-setting dialogue with local communities. For such visits, a councilor usually joined the provincial on a Sunday during the visitation. Following the Eucharist and a community meal, brothers met with the team. Members of the community prepared for the meetings with the use of reflection sheets sent in advance by the provincial.

The general council also made efforts toward team ministry and replaced traditional canonical visitations of evaluation with fraternal visits of animation. During April 1990, Brother Bernard joined three members of the general council, Brothers Claude Cadoret, Armand Boisvert, and Xavier Werneth, on a fraternal team visit of each local community. Illustrating the superior general's message with slides of brothers in the province, the visitors led shared reflection sessions on the general chapter's theme of refoundation. The *Annuaire* of 1989-90 described their efforts to help each community balance and integrate its life of prayer, apostolate, and community as *"an enduring grace for the province."* (*Annuaire* 84:211) The general councilors followed up their visit with a special letter to each local community to help it apply their message to its particular circumstances. Evaluating the effectiveness of the team visit, the provincial council stated in a letter to the superior general: *"The benefits of the fraternal visit are numerous. It gave our province a sense of the wider Institute. The collaborative interaction between the general and provincial councils was a powerful witness to community and team ministry."*

Brother Bernard made genuine efforts to promote communal ministries throughout the province. For example, by his assignments in Baton Rouge, he enabled the brothers to build a team ministry around the work being done at St. Paul Adult Learning Center. A team of brothers joined with two sisters of St. Joseph to provide adult basic education and GED preparation for uneducated and poor adults. A special feature of the center became its Learn-Earn project to help unemployed persons develop skills and find jobs. At various times Brothers Norman Champagne, Bennet Bishop, Albert Guarino, Elliot Couvillon, and William Leimbach worked together in this ministry to the poor. Brother Bernard

made similar efforts to bring brothers together to work on various communal projects among the poor during the summertime and vacation periods.

Wider Institute

Brother Bernard and the general council shared a goal of involving the New Orleans Province more than ever before in the life of the wider Institute, which in 1988 consisted of 1,663 members in more than 30 countries. As a result of the 1988 General Chapter, renewal sessions in Rome became more international. Simultaneous translations of presentations into English, Spanish, and French gave more brothers access to the program. Fourteen brothers from the New Orleans Province participated in the international renewal programs between 1990 and 1994, seven in the long sessions from January to May and seven in the shorter ones in July. Brother Bernard took an active role as one of the presenters, talking on the Rule and community life. A second member of the province, Brother Ray Hebert, traveled to Rome to give a series of presentations on chastity and psychosexual development. Brothers Ray and Bernard made similar presentations in Lesotho and Zambia at renewal sessions for English-speaking brothers in Africa.

In addition, Brother Bernard participated in several leadership meetings of major superiors in Rome, in Africa, and in the US in efforts to enhance collaboration. On March 15, 1989, he wrote the brothers, *"I returned this week from Rome where the US provincials met with the general council. I profited greatly. . . . The primary purpose of the meeting, which Brother Xavier facilitated, was consultation."* Brother Bernard frequently asked general councilors to attend meetings of the three American provincials and invited them to many province events such as renewal sessions, workshops, chapters, and annual Easter gatherings. In 1992, Brother Jesús Marín, the superior general, accepted his invitation to address the province at the Easter gathering. Also, Brother Bernard often mentioned in his newsletters the activities and travels of Brother Xavier and the general council in his efforts to keep the province informed about the wider Institute and to strengthen ties with it.

Brother Bernard encouraged brothers to extend their work beyond province boundaries. Brother Ray Hebert traveled to Italy and Spain in his work with the commission studying ordination in the Institute. Brother Will McCue served as chaplain and Brother Adrian Gaudin as headmaster for several years at St. Columba's College in St. Albans, England. Brother Francis Fleming lent a helping hand to the brothers in the Philippines from 1989 to 1991. In addition, the provincial council supported the establishment of the André Coindre

International Center in Lyons, not just financially, but by freeing Brother Marcel Riviere to go there as its director.

A Call to Risk

In keeping with a decision of the previous chapter to change the time of the chapters from the Christmas holidays to the summer, the 23rd Provincial Chapter took place in July 1990 at Brother Martin High School. This change allowed brothers time to reflect prayerfully without the pressures of school. Father Edmundo Rodriguez, former Jesuit provincial, led the delegates in reflective and faith-sharing sessions. These communal discernment sessions brought the capitulants to a *"willingness to take prudent risks in order to respond generously to God's call. The chapter gave renewed impetus to the previous chapter's thrust toward refounding local communities, formulated a challenging definition of spirituality, and reaffirmed schools as the context of our mission while calling each brother to specific action on behalf of the materially poor."* (*Annuaire* 84:204)

Brothers gave a very positive evaluation of the chapter. As usual, they were impressed by the delegates' openness and honesty in discussing issues in a respectful manner. The time set aside for prayer added a spiritual dimension to the decision-making process that challenged the participants to express their faith in God and in each other. Brother Paul Mulligan captured this faith dimension when he characterized the chapter as *"prayerfully courageous." "I found the chapter,"* he said, *"unafraid to face the tough issues confronting our province."* (*A Call to Risk*, p. 6) Brother Chris Sweeney, a novice, prepared a booklet entitled *A Call to Risk* which presented a summary of the chapter's decisions and expressed the spirit of the delegates with photos and quotations. Brothers in other provinces, lay colleagues, benefactors, relatives, and friends all received copies to keep them abreast of life in the New Orleans Province.

The 1990 Provincial Chapter not only reaffirmed the province's efforts at refoundation, but clarified its meaning: *"Refoundation is the ongoing conversion of individuals and groups into prayerful apostolic communities. Prayerful apostolic communities are characterized by intentional efforts to integrate and balance their prayer, apostolic, and communal lives."* (Minutes, RS 27) And in Resolution 20, the chapter called for what became known as PAC sessions, *"meetings in order to get to the nitty gritty of what prayerful apostolic community was all about."* Brothers used a variety of sources, such as follow-up letters from team visits of the general and provincial councilors, as starting points for reflection. The format for these weekly meetings varied from

house to house. At St. Stanislaus, for example, Brother Marcel Riviere, director, divided his large community of 29 brothers into four small groups for reflection and faith sharing.

Communal Spirituality

The chapter of 1990 definitely set the province agenda for the next three years. Several of its more challenging resolutions, especially those designed to improve the quality of community prayer, met with some initial resistance. One resolution, for example, called for remodeling brothers' chapels to facilitate interaction in communal prayer. Brothers at the large residence on Elysian Fields Avenue in New Orleans relocated the altar and lectern and rearranged the pews to bring brothers and celebrant closer together. At Bay St. Louis, brothers first experimented with using a room in the school's Resource Center before rearranging the pews in the large school chapel. Finally after many community discussions, the brothers at St. Stanislaus converted two former classrooms in Centennial Hall into a small chapel for their daily use.

In another controversial decision, the chapter declared that all community retreats should take place in retreat houses and offer spiritual experiences in keeping with the communal spirituality expressed in the Rule. Thus, the provincial council offered four community retreats in 1991 at different times in different retreat houses, but none at Bay St. Louis. Some brothers accustomed to making their annual retreat at the Bay found that decision difficult to accept. Further, the provincial council invited Father James Borbely, SJ, to lead the brothers' retreats for three consecutive years. To assure their communal dimension, he designed the retreats for the *"corporate person,"* yet still based them upon the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. They centered on such themes as *"Discipleship and How We are Being Called to Minister."* In spite of resistance, the council upheld the chapter's mandate and continued to schedule all community retreats at retreat houses. Of course, the council made exceptions for sick and elderly brothers. For those brothers requesting more time for private prayer at retreat, the council compromised, offering them a six-day retreat with the first three days being private and the last three communal.

Action for the Poor

The chapter of 1990 also called for brothers to involve themselves in some kind of summertime social justice training or project. Thirty-three brothers met in New Orleans on October 7, 1991, to generate an action plan for province

missionary and social justice initiatives. In a discernment session facilitated by Brother Louis Couvillon, brothers expressed their desire for initiatives close to home to make it easier for brothers to participate and to involve lay colleagues, students, and volunteers. So the province sponsored several activities each summer for these purposes. These projects brought brothers to a Bible Studies Camp at a Navajo mission in Arizona, to a center for Youth Under Severe Stress conducted by New England brothers in Connecticut, to a summer camp for children with respiratory ailments, and to a week-long *Bridges* experience at Hope House in New Orleans. Brother Virgil Harris, development director at Hope House since 1987, coordinated this last project to educate people about the needs of the urban poor.

St. Anne's Navajo Indian Mission project in Klagetoh, Arizona, expanded into an evangelization effort involving the prenovices. Beginning with the 1993 Christmas holidays, brothers, graduates, and students from various schools in the province organized regular trips there during holiday periods to deliver clothes and toys and to help out as needed. Brothers Charles Schilling and Francis Fleming successfully applied to the Koch Foundation for grants to pay for these evangelization projects. And the brothers' work at St. Anne's led to the assignment of Brother John Hotstream to work with Father Flan O'Neil, the Franciscan pastor there, on a full-time basis beginning in 1994. In preparation for his ministry with native Americans, Brother John participated in a two-week program at Sioux Spiritual Center, Plainview, South Dakota.

Refoundation in Africa

Projects close to home did not mean an end to the brothers' involvement in Africa. At the initiative of Brother Bernard, a complete reassessment of the province's mission at Lacor Seminary took place in light of the spirit of refoundation. During a 1990 team visit to Gulu, Uganda, Brothers Bernard and Xavier led a discernment session with Brothers Joachim Parr and Elliot Couvillon, both of whom had served in Uganda for more than 30 years. Then the four brothers met twice with Bishop Martin Luluga of Gulu and with key members of his advisory council; they also consulted with the council of the Verona Fathers. Their discernment resulted in a complete change of the brothers' mission in Uganda.

Bishop Luluga expressed his strong desire that the province continue the work it began in the Gulu diocese in 1931. Since 1973, the brothers had assisted in the formation of local clergy at the insistence of Bishop Cipriano Kihangire, Bishop Luluga's predecessor. Now to nurture new life among the brothers, the

bishop allowed them to turn full control of the seminary over to the local clergy, and he approved their plan for recruiting and forming Ugandan brothers. Thus, the brothers moved from their house on the Lacor compound and established the Brother Norbert Centre at Alokolum. The new community set up a house for initial formation to help young Ugandans discern their religious vocation. In consultation with all involved and with the approval of the provincial and general councils, Brother Bernard designed a new administrative structure of affiliation with the District of Zambia-Zimbabwe. The New Orleans Province entered a 10-year agreement to supply finances and some personnel to the new endeavor. The district agreed to supply some personnel and to assume administrative jurisdiction of the house in Uganda with the understanding that candidates from there would make their postulancy and novitiate in Zambia and belong to that district.

Vote of Confidence

In January 1991, the province re-elected Brother Bernard on the first ballot, giving him more than the necessary two-thirds of the votes. And for the first time ever, the entire council remained intact for a second term. Only once before, in 1955, was an entire council re-named; but since Brother André had replaced Brother Felician on that council in 1953, the same four councilors did not serve two consecutive terms. For 1991-94, the council consisted of Brothers Matthias Amos, Ivy LeBlanc, Paul Montero, and Lee Barker, who served on the council for an unprecedented 10th consecutive term, two of them as provincial. The re-election represented a vote of confidence in the team ministry that the council had undertaken and the course it had pledged itself to pursue. The re-elected council had major issues to face during its second term, most of them revolving around the continued decline in personnel and the transition to lay leadership.

Death of Brother Martin

On August 24, 1991, Brother Martin Hernandez died at the age of 87. He had been a giant, a rock upon which the province had built. As principal, provincial, director, and provincial treasurer, he had played a significant role in the lives of many brothers. In his eulogy, Brother Donnan Berry noted: *"Brother Martin received many honors in his life. He is perhaps the most widely known and respected Brother of the Sacred Heart in the world today. He built numerous institutions and hob-nobbed with the eminent. But those are not the*

things we most remember and value about him; they are not his real legacy to us. Much more than his deeds we remember him for . . . his intense fidelity to duty and his conscience, his love for our community and his fierce loyalty to it, his manly piety and simple faith, his simplicity and his honesty, his love and concern for his brothers."

One honor highly treasured by Brother Martin was the prestigious *adjutor hominum* award which he received from Loyola University as its 1982 Alumnus of the Year. The Rev. James Carter, SJ, who, as president of Loyola, had presented him with the award, celebrated a memorial Mass in brother's honor, September 26, 1991, at St. Louis Cathedral. Father Carter commented in his homily that his friend Brother Martin represented *"everything I had come to know in a Sacred Heart Brother strong, simple, manly, intelligent, self-effacing, pious, loving, with a grand sense of humor and a deep love for the outdoors."*

Transition to Lay Administrations

Brother Martin's death symbolized the end of another era. When Brother Martin had become provincial in 1949, the province numbered 245 professed brothers, almost all of them available to teach. By the time of his death, the province counted barely 20 brothers in the classroom. During the six years of Brother Bernard's mandate, this diminution of manpower had a strong impact on the life of the province. The simple reduction of numbers from 109 to 91 between 1988 and 1994 does not tell the whole story. Besides the loss of 20 brothers, 13 by death and seven departures, more than 10 percent of the brothers in 1994 were infirm or convalescent. Twenty-four brothers served in what came to be called *"senior ministry,"* allowing them to remain active and contribute to the external apostolate with responsibilities in keeping with their advanced age and reduced stamina. Only two new professions took place from 1988 to 1994, hardly sufficient to replace the 31 brothers removed from full-time ministry because of death, departure, infirmity, or age. As a result, in 1994 only 43 brothers were active full-time in school assignments and their average age was over 51.

Along with the reduction of province manpower came increased reliance on lay leadership in the schools. For many years, the brothers in the province had worked in close collaboration with their lay colleagues and had grown in appreciation of their ability and dedication. Over the years, the brothers entrusted them with key roles of responsibility. By the late '60s, lay teachers served not just as coaches and athletic and music directors, but also as academic department chairpersons and guidance counselors. In the '70s, they joined

administrative teams as deans of discipline and assistant principals. And in the late '80s, they became campus ministers and principals of brothers' schools.

Happily the brothers had begun years earlier to share with lay faculties their charism through the many workshops and in-service sessions based on their guide *Educational Mission and Ministry*. So the transition to lay administrations went smoothly. The provincial council deliberately decided to start with community-owned schools where it was able to choose someone who not only had worked with the brothers a long time, but who shared their educational philosophy and values. Another of the council's reasons for starting the transition in community-owned schools in New Orleans, Bay St. Louis, and Baton Rouge was to assure the diocesan schools that the province had no intention of abandoning them. Also in the community-owned schools, the provincial council had authority to adapt administrative structures. This allowed the council to name a brother as president to work with a newly appointed lay principal. In the new arrangement, principals were generally the instructional and spiritual leaders in the school, responsible for personnel, faculty, students, and the academic program. Presidents worked with the school's board of directors in setting school policies, assured that the brothers' charism guided the school's programs and overall development, and coordinated the school's various responsibilities in regard to public relations and business affairs in the wider community.

Mr. John Devlin began serving as the province's first lay principal at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans in August 1988. Brother Ivy LeBlanc, principal there since 1980, became president. At St. Stanislaus, starting with the 1991-92 school year, the school's 138th year of operation, Dr. Michael Ryan served as its first lay principal. Brother Paul Montero, president and principal since 1986, continued as president. And in 1992, after 121 years of religious principals in Houma, Mr. Alan J. Powers became the first lay principal at Vandebilt, a diocesan school. The following year in Baton Rouge, Brother Francis David became president at Catholic High School after serving eight years as its principal, a job he turned over to his assistant principal, Dr. Gregory Brandao, a 1973 graduate of Catholic High and a former assistant principal at Brother Martin High School.

Through personal training by brother principals, in-service workshops, and professional studies, these lay principals were well prepared to perpetuate the brothers' charism. Dr. Brandao looked upon his doctoral program in Catholic School Leadership at the University of San Francisco as a sort of layman's novitiate during which he studied the history of the Institute and its community documents. More specifically, he studied strategies for passing on the brothers' educational vision and charism to lay colleagues. His doctoral dissertation,

entitled *Faculty Perceptions Regarding Practice of Brothers of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Province Charism in Community-Owned Secondary Schools*, tested how well the values professed in *Educational Mission and Ministry* were being translated into reality in province-owned schools. These values were indeed being passed on. During Mr. Devlin's first year as principal at BMHS, for example, the school hosted a visiting committee from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for its periodic evaluation. Its report showed unqualified agreement that the school remained true to its stated philosophy and objectives. (*Annuaire* 83:209)

When Brother Ronald Hingle, principal in Montgomery, was named vocation director effective in July 1993, there was no brother to replace him as principal. That left only one brother in the province as principal, Brother Ronald Talbot in Thibodaux. But 1993-94 was his last year there, and Mr. Gary Phillips, longtime teacher at E. D. White, replaced him.

Incorporation of Schools

Concurrent with the transition toward lay administration of the brothers' schools there ran a steady movement toward their incorporation. Years earlier the council had begun a study to incorporate each school as a legal entity in view of the increasing number of exclusions in liability insurance coverage. Harsh realities of American society since the '70s necessitated such precautions as religious institutions became embroiled in civil lawsuits. More and more Catholic schools found themselves being sued and held legally responsible for alleged wrong actions of any school employee. The brothers' schools were no exception to this trend, and school administrators found themselves spending increasing amounts of time, energy, and money on legal matters.

Some suits were nuisance cases and involved frivolous complaints regarding grades, the omission of a student's picture from the yearbook, or even voting procedures to elect a homecoming queen. Others of a more serious nature involved questions of due process in expelling a student or terminating a teacher's contract, questions of negligence on the school's part when a student was injured on school grounds or at a school activity, or questions of a faculty member striking a student. Whether charges were serious or not, principals could not afford to ignore any allegations because lawsuits could involve large sums of money and jeopardize a school's future.

In February 1988, the provincial council formed a Corporate Structures Committee consisting of Brothers Mark Thornton, Francis David, and Ivy

LeBlanc, chairman, to investigate whether to make each of the brothers' schools and the province separate corporate entities. Brothers Bernard, Ivy, and Francis attended a four-day seminar in Memphis conducted by the National Association of Treasurers of Religious Institutes on Corporate Structures and Religious Life.

The following year, in June 1989, the committee invited Attorney Jerome Reso of Baldwin and Haspel in New Orleans to conduct a workshop on the need to incorporate the schools for the provincial council, boards of community-owned schools, and any brothers interested. He explained how the "corporate veil" protected the assets of one school from a lawsuit brought against another school by making each school a separate legal entity. Also, incorporation could protect province assets from lawsuits brought against a school. Because the risks were great and the stakes were so high, the 24 brothers attending the workshop unanimously agreed that the council *"should proceed quickly with incorporation."* (Newsletter, 7:20)

After much study and consultation, the provincial council decided to incorporate the schools as a legal means to protect and promote the brothers' mission. It engaged the law firm of Baldwin and Haspel in New Orleans to set up the necessary legal structures in such a way that there would be no conflict with canon law or the constitutions in the Rule of Life. In announcing the decision to the province, Brother Bernard explained: *"One purpose is to reduce the exposure of the whole province to liabilities which may come from a possible lawsuit against one of the entities. Another is to insure the continuity of our province works into the future."* (Newsletter, 7:22)

The council decision created 15 corporations in Baton Rouge, Bay St. Louis, and New Orleans. These corporations included four basic types: those for the operational programs, such as Catholic High School, St. Stanislaus College, Brother Martin High School, and Camp Stanislaus; those for holding and managing school property and buildings, such as St. Vincent Holdings, Buteux Holdings, and St. Aloysius Holdings; those for managing investments and endowments, such as CHS Foundation, SSC Progression Corporation, and St. Aloysius Century Foundation; and still others to manage properties of the schools' foundations, such as Hearthstone Properties, Delaware Properties, and Elysian Fields Properties. Each corporation operated independently with its own board of directors. The province, incorporated as Brothers of the Sacred Heart, became sole shareholder of all the other corporations.

Incorporation involved significant changes in the administrative structures of the schools; but even before legal incorporation, chapters and the provincial council had begun making significant administrative changes in

province schools. Much earlier, for example, chapters had decided that each school should have a financial board and a faculty advisory senate. Also in regard to finances, the provincial council approved a policy in 1989 of assigning equity and management fees to the schools rather than the old system of assessments. The council also had begun to separate the role of local superior from school administrator and to establish structures so that each school would be governed by a board of directors responsible for finances and major policies.

Under corporate structures, the boards became totally independent; but the provincial council retained its right as the sole legal shareholder to name board members and the chief administrator of each school, the president. The school board, in turn, selected its chairman and named the school principal. To help the brothers and their colleagues understand the new administrative structures, the provincial council sponsored the first Annual Boards Forum in July 1994. About 50 board members, brothers and lay, from the 13 boards associated with the brothers' three community-owned schools participated in the one-day program entitled *"Sharing Our Charism."* Its purpose, according to a resolution of the 1993 Provincial Chapter, was *"to offer a service of formation in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart (to the members of the boards) as expressed in Educational Mission and Ministry and the Rule of Life."*

School Leadership Committee

In keeping with the administrative changes made in the schools, the province Principals' Committee became the School Leadership Committee and included school presidents. This committee under the leadership of Brothers Francis David and Ronald Talbot became an effective forum for sharing expertise among the various school principals and presidents. It assisted in the distribution of a resource book for classroom prayer created by a Gospel Education Resource Team (GERT), composed of Brothers Robert LeBlanc, Alan Drain, Ronald Talbot, Adrian Gaudin, and William Boyles.

In June 1990, the School Leadership Committee revised the 1985 edition of *Educational Mission and Ministry*, a document that had become a guiding force for the brothers' schools. Drawing from the document, the committee completed an instrument for evaluating administrators of each of the brothers' schools, and it coordinated with the council periodic evaluations of each principal. Members of the provincial council conducted the evaluations and met afterwards with the board of directors, the entire faculty, and privately with the principal to share the results and to make recommendations for better implementation of the brothers' charism.

Through the School Leadership Committee, the province undertook several social justice initiatives. On Monday, January 18, 1993, *"an important and unprecedented event"* took place: the first Martin Luther King Conference for faculty and staff of all of the brothers' schools. (Newsletter, 11:8) In a letter to the faculties announcing the conference, Brother Ronald Talbot, principal at E. D. White in Thibodaux and chairman of the School Leadership Committee, explained its purpose: *"We are called to active involvement in social justice education by the Gospels, by the Church, by the provincial chapter, by* Educational Mission and Ministry, *but most importantly by the cry of the poor, needy, and the oppressed."* The Rev. Michael Crosby, OFM, the keynote speaker, challenged the 377 educators who attended to deepen their awareness of how to live the beatitudes in order to promote social justice and peace in the schools. Brother Martin High School hosted this day of reflection for teachers from six schools in the province.

The School Leadership Committee also organized small groups of religion and English teachers from brothers' schools to develop social justice materials for use in their specific areas of the curriculum. They designed units to integrate the topic of social justice into the curriculum by including lessons on racial issues for freshman English classes and lessons on gender issues for use in freshman religion classes.

For the school year 1994-95, Mr. John Devlin became the first lay person to assume chairmanship of the School Leadership Committee. As such, he represented the province on the Interprovince Administrators' Committee. This committee, composed of members of the three United States provinces, sponsored a workshop on the brothers' charism for administrators of the brothers' schools. Forty-seven administrators, most of them lay people, from 12 schools attended the sessions at San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park, Florida, August 5-9, 1994. This workshop, like so many others during the transition to lay administrations, signaled the fact that the brothers' schools had successfully entered a new kind of partnership with the laity, one that enabled them to achieve new peaks of excellence and provide hope and encouragement to the brothers as their numbers diminished.

Vocation Efforts

In spite of their declining number and increasing age, the brothers continued to make generous efforts at recruiting. Brothers participated in studies conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) to determine causes for the decline of vocations to religious life, especially among

teaching communities of men. In 1990 the province Vocation Committee set a double goal of vocation awareness and recruitment of candidates. Each year the committee continued to sponsor an Associates' Retreat during Palm Sunday weekend. Under the leadership of Brother Dwight Kenney, vocation director, the committee sponsored a series of *"Come and See"* days for high school juniors as follow-ups to vocation presentations in the brothers' schools. Twenty-six juniors participated in the program at Abbey Camp in Covington, Louisiana, in May 1990. Nineteen of them committed themselves to join the province's Associate Program as seniors.

Besides typical activities, such as making classroom presentations and helping with senior retreats, the vocation director worked closely on particular programs with a coordinator in each of the brothers' schools. Together they planned special projects, such as picnics at the novitiate, to gather associates from various schools. To reach beyond the high school level, Brother Dwight placed posters at various Newman Centers, visited the open house at the UNO's Newman Center, and gave vocation talks at Keesler Air Force Base. Also, he co-chaired the committee of the Vocation Counselors Association in New Orleans which planned and sponsored vocation retreats aimed mostly at college students.

Hospitality Center and Service Volunteers

Among the goals suggested by the New Orleans Housing Task Force were these: to bring the New Orleans houses to closer proximity to one another, to move the prenovitiate to a larger residence within walking distance of BMHS, and to provide a place large enough for all the brothers in the city to gather for communal celebrations. At its February 7, 1990, meeting, the provincial council hit upon a way to achieve these goals. The owner of a church building at 4600 Elysian Fields Avenue agreed to sell the church to the province for $185,000. The council financed the purchase of this building by the sale of the two houses at 1920 and 1930 Robert E. Lee Blvd. for $100,000 each. Then the council moved the prenovitiate community from 1920 Robert E. Lee Blvd. to 4671 Painters Street and assigned the members of the diverse apostolate community at the 1930 residence to other local communities.

With much imagination and a little money, the former Lutheran Church building was soon readied to serve as a hospitality center. Its location across Elysian Fields from Brother Martin High School made it ideal for the hospitality community, formerly at 4671 Painters Street. Its floor plan which included three baths, space for six bedrooms, and ample reception area accommodated well

various demands. The vocation director and provincial took up residence at the Hospitality Center, a convenient arrangement since their offices on Elysian Fields were just next door. This spacious building enabled the hospitality community to invite young men in vocation discernment to live with them as volunteers.

Hospitality Center in New Orleans in 1992 following its renovation

Brother Henry Gaither, a former vocation director, founded and directed the New Orleans Volunteer Service Community. The NOVSC allowed college-age men to experience religious community life and become involved in some type of service to poor or marginalized young people. In 1991, three volunteers lived at the Hospitality Center. These young men tutored, coached, and helped with retreat work at Brother Martin High School. They also volunteered their time at Covenant House, St. Leo Elementary School, Project Lazarus, and Odyssey House in New Orleans. In 1993, Brother Henry, full of energy, enthusiasm, and expertise, accepted membership on the national board of the Catholic Volunteer Network which coordinates the placement and formation of more than 2,000 young people in full-time volunteer programs across the country. This position put him in touch with many fine men; and each year he invited three of them to live, work, and pray for one year with the brothers.

The Hospitality Center also provided a place where the brothers in the city could gather more easily for communal celebrations. Now with a place to welcome their associates and co-workers at Brother Martin High School, the brothers invited faculty members celebrating birthdays during the week to Mass and breakfast on Monday mornings. On Wednesdays, they sponsored a similar

program for seniors and their parents. Also, the center offered the school an additional place for faculty and student gatherings, retreats, and liturgies.

Provincial Chapter of 1993

The Chapter Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Brother Donnan Berry, spent almost an entire year preparing brothers for the 1993 chapter. Thorough preparation and effective presentations enabled this 24th Provincial Chapter to tackle a wide range of issues. Brother Ronald Hingle summarized for the chapter the results of the study on the Future of Religious Life in the United States (FORUS). He then guided a reflection on eight areas of religious life which the study said needed transformation. Finally he led a discussion on the results of the CARA study on the decline of vocations to teaching brothers' Institutes. Brothers Bernard and Ivy LeBlanc clarified the distinct roles of canon law and civil law in a two-part presentation on incorporation. They showed how province boards of directors work in harmony with the provincial council and the brothers' Rule and Constitutions. They offered the brothers a new awareness concerning *"partnership"* versus *"ownership"* as an attitude toward the brothers' schools and their mission statements.

Delegates discussed expectations of the brothers regarding consultation before decision-making. Incorporation of schools with boards given full authority completed the shift of the locus of decision-making from the community into the school. This shift gave rise to some tensions and feelings of disenfranchisement on the part of brothers not directly involved in administration. These issues resulted in the chapter's call for quarterly forums of exchange between brothers and school board members. In other school matters, the chapter approved principal points of a province policy on physical and sexual abuse. Finally, in perhaps the most life-giving of the delegates' decisions for the schools, the chapter challenged each province school to twin with a needy school or institution.

In community-life issues, chapter delegates addressed aging and health care for the brothers and made important distinctions concerning levels of care which the province could provide. Also, the chapter reaffirmed the value of the weekly reflection sessions of PAC, prayerful apostolic communities, as a means of integrating the brothers' lives.

Significant Forces

In its report prepared for the 1994 General Chapter, the provincial council distinguished four significant forces that shaped the province during Brother Bernard's administration: the vocation crisis, the 1988 General Chapter's thrust toward renewal of religious life, the brothers' concern for the materially poor, and the excellence of the brothers' schools during a time of radical change. As provincial, Brother Bernard courageously addressed questions facing the province, finding creative responses rooted in faith and the guiding principles of the Rule of Life. He evidenced dedication to his brothers when he stood by them steadfastly in times of their personal crises, offering them support, encouragement, and practical assistance.

In his last provincial newsletter, Brother Bernard used the Rev. André Coindre's metaphor, *"Man is an old clock that must be wound daily with care,"* to share his prayerful reflections upon his six years in office. He humbly asked forgiveness from brothers he may have hurt when he wound the clock too tight, forgetting its intricate and unique interior workings. With gratitude, he thanked the brothers for their ready support and the big-heartedness in accepting his efforts. Brother Marcel Riviere captured well Brother Bernard's leadership when he wrote about him: *"A man of exceptional intelligence, intuitions, and vision, he challenged the brothers to face realities that could very well have destroyed them. He also challenged every aspect of province life in a good and non-threatening way, especially in terms of renewal and participation in the renewal process."*

Brothers throughout the Institute recognized Brother Bernard's leadership abilities. Capitulants at the 1994 General Chapter in Rome saw in him a brother of strong faith with a daring vision of hope for the future. On the first ballot, the chapter elected Brother Bernard as 15th superior general, empowering him to work with a team of brothers to continue the refoundation of the Institute by encouraging and sustaining new initiatives to create prayerful apostolic communities.

CHAPTER 11

BROTHER PAUL

(1994-1997)

Eight months before he took office on August 15, 1994, Brother Paul Montero knew that he had been elected provincial. On December 21, 1993, Brother Bernard Couvillion announced to the brothers the election results for his replacement as provincial. In an open letter addressed to Brother Paul, he wrote: *"Thank you for agreeing to serve in this new way. You have already served generously in the roles of teacher, guidance counselor, principal, director, novice master, vocation director, provincial councilor, president, and in a variety of roles in the wider Church such as president of the National Assembly of Religious Brothers. Since you've served so well in each of these roles, we have confidence that as provincial you will have both a treasury of experience from which you can draw and a practical empathy for our needs in the variety of our assignments."*

Brother Bernard went on to say, *"You have been a model leader in the renewal of the province. We admire your efforts at personal and spiritual renewal. We respect your leadership of the interprovince Belvidere renewal programs as well as your tenure in the province formation programs. We look to you to challenge us to authentic renewal along the lines of PAC in the Institute and according to your own graced intuitions."* (Newsletter, 12:7)

Brother Paul's youthful looks and enthusiasm belied his 57 years. He brought to the office of provincial a wide variety of experience, the most recent being president of St. Stanislaus since 1986. He had served on the provincial council 12 years during the administrations of Brothers Lee Barker and Bernard. Elected to the provincial council to work with Brother Paul were Brothers Ivy LeBlanc, president of Brother Martin High School; Matthias Amos, local director in Houma; Bernard Couvillion, outgoing provincial; and Brother Francis David, president of Catholic High School in Baton Rouge.

At the change of administration, the province numbered 91 brothers. Eleven of them were infirm; another 24 served in senior ministries suited to their advanced age and their stamina. Forty-three brothers were engaged in full-time active assignments in six schools: Brother Martin High School in New Orleans, Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, E. D. White High School in Thibodaux, McGill-Toolen High School in Mobile, St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis, and Vandebilt High School in Houma. Seventeen brothers remained in teaching or tutoring; the rest worked in administration, finances, campus ministry, counseling, prefecting, maintenance, or development. None of the schools had a brother as principal, but a brother served as president of each of the three province-owned schools in Bay St. Louis, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge.

1994 General Chapter

Because the number of professed brothers in the province had decreased since the 1988 General Chapter from 117 to 91, the New Orleans Province, numbering fewer than 100 brothers, was entitled to elect only one delegate, instead of two, to the 1994 General Chapter. It chose Brother Bernard, outgoing provincial. Since the chapter began in late August, Brother Paul, not Brother Bernard, attended by right of office as provincial. Brother Paul was on his way to the general chapter when he assumed his responsibilities as provincial on August 15, 1994. That same day, the provincial secretary, Mrs. Brenda DiGiovanni, issued his first newsletter to the province. Continuing the 12-year-old tradition of a regular provincial newsletter to the brothers, Brother Paul made a few changes in it. He named it *Currents*, changed its format slightly, and switched from blue to gray paper. In his first issue, he thanked Brother Bernard: *"As a province and as individuals we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Bernie for his six years as provincial. Like each of you, I have been blessed by his style of leadership, his compassion, patience, availability, and honesty; and by his brotherhood and friendship."* (*Currents*, 1:1)

By means of the fax machine, Brother Paul sent the second issue of *Currents* from Rome. In it he commented that the 32nd General Chapter constituted *"a marvelous experience in brotherhood. Sharing with Brothers from many parts of the world gives a perspective that is truly enriching and energizing. There is no doubt that the remaining weeks of the chapter will be challenging but rewarding."* (*Currents* 1:2) Also he announced that the chapter chose Brother Bernard as chairman of its very important steering committee. Little did he then realize that two weeks later, on September 9, 1994, the chapter would elect Brother Bernard as superior general of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to serve

six years until the year 2000. Never before had a chapter elected as superior general a brother who had not previously served in the general administration. This bold move showed the confidence that the chapter placed in Brother Bernard to lead the Institute into the new millennium.

Eucharist of Thanksgiving

On October 16, the feast of St. Margaret Mary, the new provincial council was installed during a special Eucharist of Thanksgiving at Brother Martin High School in New Orleans. Brother Bernard, newly elected superior general, shared in the celebrations. Jubilant brothers, justly proud of the leadership that the New Orleans Province provided to the Institute, congratulated him and pledged their support for him in his new ministry. Filling the vacancy Brother Bernard left on the provincial council was the next in line according to the balloting, Brother Donnan Berry, president of St. Stanislaus.

At the celebration, the brothers paid special tribute to Brother Lee Barker, outgoing provincial councilor, thanking him for an unprecedented 33 years on the provincial council. The brothers also thanked Brother Xavier Werneth, who completed a six-year term as assistant general in Rome, and welcomed him back to the province to relieve Brother Donnan of his duties as local director at St. Stanislaus. Brother Paul used the occasion to address the assembled brothers on the important mandates of the general chapter: to build prayerful apostolic communities, to reflect together weekly on the Rule of Life, to continue with ongoing formation, to develop the process of communal spiritual discernment, and to bring young people to a greater awareness of God's love for them as individuals and to help them respond to it.

Province Goals

In the context of a retreat at St. Mary of the Pines Retreat Center in Chatawa, Mississippi, December 27-30, 1994, the provincial council outlined for itself five major goals: to foster creative efforts in evangelizing youth, to help brothers develop prayerful apostolic communities, to promote vocations in new and effective ways, to provide for the elderly and infirm brothers, and to promote all brothers' ongoing formation. These goals, based on resolutions of the most recent general and provincial chapters, set the agenda for the council's action for the next three years. In January 1995, the council met with the Directors' Committee and pointed out the role of the local directors in achieving various objectives related to the province goals. Brother Paul encouraged

directors to be faithful to the weekly faith-sharing sessions in their local communities. The chapters and the council, he said, viewed these prayerful reflection sessions, rooted in the Rule of Life, as the primary means of ongoing formation of the brothers and hoped that they would lead to a better integration of the brothers' apostolate, spirituality, and community life.

Provincial Council Members, 1994-1997: Brothers Ivy LeBlanc, Matthias Amos, Paul Montero, Donnan Berry, and Francis David

Giving top priority to ongoing formation of the brothers, the provincial council boldly decided to sponsor a summer renewal program for the province in Lyons, France. Fourteen brothers participated in a two-week session in July 1995, at the André Coindre International Center in Lyons: Brothers Anton Sokira, Aquin Gauthier, Charles Schilling, Donnan Berry, Dwight Kenney, Eduardo Baldioceda, Farrel Lorio, James Burns, Michael Dawson, Neal Golden, Ronald Hingle, Ronald Talbot, William McCue, and Xavier Werneth.

Brother Marcel Riviere, director of the center, hosted and coordinated the renewal program in the restored home of the founder. Brother Bernard Couvillion, superior general, served as facilitator as well as prayer and reflection leader. Brothers René Sanctorum and Jean Roure, former provincials of France, made presentations on the Institute's founding charism and early history. With French brothers serving as guides, participants visited sites important in the Institute's history: Fourvière, Monistrol, Paradis, LePuy, Écully, and Paray le Monial. This first session proved so popular that the council scheduled a second one for 1996 and named Brother Ronald Hingle to serve as staff leader for prayer, reflection, and process. Ten brothers signed up for the 1996 summer

session in Lyons: Brothers Carl Bouchereau, Carl Evans, Eldon Crifasi, Francis Fleming, Jerome Lepre, Matthias Amos, Paul Mulligan, Pierre St. Pierre, Ray Hebert, and William Leimbach.

Ongoing formation in the province during the '90s reached beyond the brothers to their lay colleagues. More than 50 administrators, campus ministers, guidance directors, and activity directors from five schools in the province participated in the annual three-day Leadership Conference on "Sharing Our Charism" at Lumen Christi Retreat Center, August 5-7, 1995, in Houma. A month earlier, the province sponsored a one-day Boards Forum on "Partnership in Charism" for more than 50 lay members of the various boards associated with province corporations. This third annual workshop at St. Stanislaus aimed at forming board members in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart as expressed in *Educational Mission and Ministry* and the Rule of Life.

Collaborative Initiatives

Ongoing formation projects in collaboration with the other United States provinces continued during Brother Paul's administration. The three provinces sponsored for the first time a special renewal program for the interprovince novitiate alumni. Eighteen brothers who made the novitiate at City Park Avenue in New Orleans since its beginning in 1981 assembled at St. Augustine Retreat Center in Bay St. Louis for the weeklong program in August 1995. Eight young brothers from the New Orleans Province participated: Brothers Barry Landry, Brian Weber, Charles Schilling, Christopher Sweeney, David Landry, James Burns, Michael Dawson, and Ronald Hingle. Four staff members from the three United States provinces facilitated the program: Brother Robert Breault of New England, former novice master; Brother Joseph Holthaus of New York, former novice teacher; Brother Ray Hebert, director of the novitiate house; and Brother Ronald Hingle, also a participant. Brother Paul represented the three provincials.

In addition, Brother Paul participated in the *Africa '95* renewal session in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1995. Besides helping to finance the program, the province supplied one of the main speakers, Brother Ray Hebert, novitiate director. On his way home, Brother Paul stopped in Rome to meet with Brother Bernard Couvillion, superior general.

Meeting With the Superior General

Besides enjoying each other's friendship and company in Rome, Brothers Paul and Bernard discussed various ongoing province projects. One collaborative

project with the Institute involved India. In 1994 while at the general chapter, Brothers Paul and Bernard had agreed with Brother P. Jeyaraj, superior general of a diocesan congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in southern India, that the New Orleans Province would host two of his brothers. Brothers Arokisamy Dhiviyanathan and Swaminathan Xavier arrived in the United States in 1995 to live with the American brothers for two years as part of a spiritual and cultural exchange program. Both were stationed at St. Stanislaus where they helped out with computer work in the development and finance offices.

Another important topic discussed by Brothers Paul and Bernard was the province's progress in developing prayerful apostolic communities (PAC) and the use of the booklet promulgating the 1994 General Chapter ordinances and recommendations as a reference tool for local directors in leading brothers in weekly PAC reflection sessions. The general council had published the acts of the general chapter in a booklet entitled *Feed Them With the Finest Wheat.* This promulgation of chapter legislation had come to the brothers in a new format utilizing color photos and graphic designs to make the document attractive and easy to read. The booklet presented the main thrusts of the general chapter in a series of letters addressed to each brother, local communities, members of formation teams, members of apostolic teams, brothers in the service of authority, and brothers of the year 2000 the year of the next general chapter.

At his meeting with the superior general, Brother Paul made some advanced plans for the visitation of the province by Brothers Jean-Guy Roy and Mathieu Cabo, general councilors, in March and April 1996. Finally, the two superiors discussed the program of studies and plans for the ordination of Brother Louis Couvillon, who had been called to priesthood by the brothers in the province in 1994. Since then, Brother Louis pursued further studies in theology and spirituality at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis in preparation for his ordination by Bishop Terry Steib, SVD, June 8, 1996, at St. Stanislaus.

Resolution 28

Resolution 28 of the 1993 Provincial Chapter called upon the provincial council to address the needs of elderly and infirm brothers and to *"progress toward the establishment of one or more personal care facilities."* To involve all brothers in the consultation process, the entire council met with each local community in January 1995. Then, the council established *"two special task forces to study future needs in the area of personnel and facilities at St. Stanislaus and at 4601 Elysian Fields and to make recommendations to the provincial council who will make all final decisions."* (Provincial Circular, Dec.

13, 1994) In March 1995, the council named six brothers to each task force with Brother Ronald Talbot chairman of the New Orleans task force and Brother Xavier Werneth chairman of the one for Bay St. Louis. Under their leadership, the two task forces met jointly more than a dozen times to discuss common issues.

With a special grant of $15,000 from the Tri-Conference Office of Religious Retirement to help pay for professional consultation in implementing RS-28, the province hired Linbeck Consulting Services out of Houston to help define the project. The project definition called for the collection of hard data. Engineers conducted a thorough physical assessment of the two residences in question to determine the financial feasibility of renovation at each site. Representatives from Linbeck Services explained the results of the physical audit to all the brothers in two open meetings in August. The facts were discouraging, reflecting years of deferred maintenance at both locations. During feedback sessions, brothers raised several new issues regarding what types of residences or facilities would best meet the needs of the old and young alike.

To address these issues, each brother was invited to complete a 27-item questionnaire. Results showed much agreement, but several questions remained. One such crucial question was whether the province should provide a residence in Bay St. Louis and in New Orleans to offer both assisted-living care and partial nursing care. Various means of consultation and discernment in view of the religious-life dimensions of the project led the brothers to consensus on this and other major issues. Brothers used several weekly meetings in their local communities to discuss the future housing needs of the province, based on an actuarial study done by Zielinkski and Associates of St. Louis and nine recommendations of the two task forces. The task forces then studied reports from each community and revised their recommendations. Two open meetings in December enabled all brothers to react to the revisions before the final report to the provincial council.

Finally, the task forces recommended that *"Centennial Hall in Bay St. Louis be renovated and expanded to accommodate about 20 brothers and to meet assisted-living and partial nursing care needs."* For New Orleans, the task forces suggested that the province *"retain separate communities with one larger residence capable of housing about 15 brothers. This residence would meet all assisted-living care needs and be designed so that it could also provide partial nursing care."* (Report to the Council, Dec. 18, 1995) Since renovating the 4601 Elysian Fields residence was not financially feasible, the task forces recommended that the property be made available to Brother Martin High School and that an alternate site with easy accessibility to the school be found for a new

residence. In January 1996, the council approved the report as submitted and named a committee to coordinate the first project at St. Stanislaus, where eight brothers were in their eighties and three of them, Brothers Aubert Rebman, Gunther Aucoin, and Pascal Ackerman, were dependent upon wheelchairs or motorized vehicles.

Financing RS-28

At the province Easter gathering in 1996, the provincial council reported on its plans to finance RS-28. Estimated costs for the two residence projects ranged from $3.4 to $4.1 million. In addition, RS-28 called for the province to increase expenditures for personnel such as nurses and sitters. To help finance these health-care costs, the council decided to enroll eligible brothers over 65 in government programs such as Supplementary Security Income and Medicaid. Also, hoping that the Vocational Development Fund might contribute significantly to the province's retirement needs, the provincial council began to look upon the Vocational Development Office as a fund-raising arm of the province and expanded its operation. Following the death of Brother Bennet Bishop, who had served as president of the Vocational Development Office in Baton Rouge, the council named Brother Will McCue as president and hired Mrs. Stephanie Maxwell as a full-time executive director. The council charged them to establish contact with the alumni of schools in cities where the brothers had once ministered but had withdrawn.

The council's report showed that for 1995-96, the brothers contributed to the three community-owned schools more than $800,000 the difference between their actual living stipends and their possible salaries as calculated on the scale used for lay teachers. In view of implementing RS-28, the council presented the three school boards possible plans for phasing-in parity of salaries: seeking to balance what the province could afford to continue contributing annually to the schools with what the schools could afford to pay the brothers.

Twinning and Evangelization

When the provincial chapter called upon province schools to twin with institutions such as other schools, group homes, or social agencies serving materially poor young people, its intention was to help each school realize its mission by reaching out beyond itself. (1993 Chapter, Resolution 38) At Brother Martin High School, Brothers Dwight Kenney and Charles Schilling worked with Mr. John Devlin, principal, to develop a twinning project with Bishop Perry

Middle School. The Edmundites had founded this middle school for at-risk, disadvantaged students, primarily African-American, to make Catholic education in a college-preparatory school an attainable goal for them. Brother Dwight committed himself to drive students from BMHS to the middle school twice a week to tutor. Also, students from the middle school visited the BMHS campus for a basketball clinic, Science Club exhibitions, a choral performance, and other activities. After their 1994 Lenten mission drive, BMHS students presented Father David Theroux, SSE, principal of BPMS, with a check for $3,413.16.

In Baton Rouge, Catholic High School pursued plans to twin with St. Francis Xavier Elementary School where Brother Brian Weber taught full-time the second semester of 1994. Catholic High also accepted some boys from Boys' Hope, a local supervised home for at-risk youth, tuition free. In Bay St. Louis, St. Stanislaus committed itself to assist Brother John Hotstream in his ministry among the Navajo Native-Americans at St. Anne Mission in Klagetoh, Arizona. Also, Brother Anton Sokira was assigned to coordinate the work of several SSC students who donated after-school hours to tutor at-risk minority students at the nearby Save Our Children Center.

1996 Provincial Chapter

During the 1996 Provincial Chapter which began July 30 at Brother Martin High School, members of the boards of directors of the province-owned schools and affiliate corporations participated in a chapter session related to the brothers' mission. A Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Brother Barry Landry, prepared a chapter agenda based on categories of concerns raised at a pre-chapter meeting the previous October: *"1) issues regarding aging and brothers' feelings of being stressed out, being weary, and being asked to do more and more; 2) issues regarding our identity, mission, our sense of being of who and what we say we are; and 3) issues regarding our relationships with our lay colleagues, their formation and preparation."* (Committee Minutes, Jan. 13, 1996) The committee chose as a chapter theme *"To make all things new in Christ."* (Rev. 22: 5) This theme captured the notion of affirming the many good happenings in the province while recognizing the need for new life and energy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

PART THREE

INTRODUCTION

Part Three of *Plus Fifty* tells the story of the brothers' ministries from 1947 to 1997 another half-century of service in the United States and New Orleans provinces. It briefly reviews the arrival and history of the brothers in each establishment and then picks up the story around 1947 where Brother Macarius Pierce left off in *A Century of Service*. Part Three is not intended to give a complete history of each school. Rather it emphasizes the role and impact of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the development of each school.

This section of the brothers' history shows how they lived out their mission expressed so elegantly in their Rule of Life:

> *"to believe in God's love,*
> *to live it, and to spread it;*
> *. . . to contribute as religious educators*
> *to the evangelization of the world*
> *particularly through the education of youth."* (Art. 13)

When the first five Brothers of the Sacred Heart arrived in Mobile in 1847, they became part of a great missionary movement of European religious to America. In keeping with their charism of evangelization through the education of youth, the brothers' first mission in the United States focused on an orphanage and elementary school associated with St. Vincent's Parish in Mobile, Alabama. The early French brothers spread out to other small parish schools, worked among struggling immigrants, and often lived in deplorable residences provided by pastors of poor parishes. These Brothers of the Sacred Heart played an important role in implanting the seedling immigrant Catholic Church into the landscape of a well-established white Anglo-Saxon Protestant society.

In 1947, their centennial year, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the United States were still experiencing phenomenal growth during an exceptional period in the history of religious life. They numbered 228 members and ministered in 16 schools. In addition, they operated two orphanages and three African mission schools. The brothers' mission remained the same as ever; but following World War II, it took a different focus. American society changed, and so did the Catholic Church. It was no longer an immigrant Church. Assimilation of European Catholics into the mainstream of American life was substantially complete. Catholics held respectable positions in the workplace and in society, even in government. Among the "brothers' boys" were outstanding leaders in

every field, and the brothers' schools enjoyed excellent reputations that were hard-earned and well-deserved.

After 1947, as the brothers' schools adapted to the times, their reputation for quality education reached new heights. Parish and diocesan schools became known as "brothers' schools" although the brothers did not own but only operated them, and occasionally conflicts arose between the brothers and the owners. In fact, from their earliest history, the brothers sometimes found themselves at odds with pastors and bishops because of poor working conditions, inadequate salaries, undue interference in the educational program, and even jealousy and suspicion. But in the late '60s, provincials became more assertive in negotiating with ecclesiastical authorities for better stipends and reasonable living conditions.

Beginning in the '70s, the diminishing number of brothers brought major changes in their schools. These started with a steady increase in the number of lay faculty members and led eventually to the transfer of the administration of the brothers' schools to their lay colleagues. Throughout every transition, however, the brothers' mission statement remained the driving force that shaped decisions and guided the philosophy of the schools. With great foresight, province leaders prepared qualified lay leaders to take over the direction of the schools; and they published guiding principles in *Educational Mission and Ministry*. Through workshops and on-the-job training, they shared their educational charism, the major reason for the schools' continued success.

In sharing the administration of their schools with lay colleagues, the brothers made an attitudinal transition from ownership to partnership. As educators in today's world, brothers consider their role of evangelization in the schools just as important as ever. At their provincial chapter in 1993, the brothers updated their mission statement to reflect their collaboration with the laity and to emphasize the role of their religious witness: *"We evangelize first of all by our witness as prayerful apostolic communities, sharing our charism with lay men and women with whom we collaborate."* In 1996, for the first time in their history, the brothers invited some of their lay colleagues to the provincial chapter.

Part Three of *Plus Fifty* tells the story of the brothers in more than 20 schools, some of which were begun in the previous century and remain open today. It recounts the happy occasions of the brothers taking over schools in new places such as the ones in Houma, Dallas, and Montgomery. Part Three also relates the sorrow involved in the withdrawal of the brothers from several schools where they had worked for many years: Catholic Boys' Home in Mobile, D'Evereux Hall in Natchez, Ascension Catholic in Donaldsonville,

Menard Memorial in Alexandria, and St. Aloysius in Vicksburg. It also picks up the story of the brothers in Africa, taking up where the book *Reflections* on East Africa left off in 1981.

Also Part Three includes an account of the brothers' houses of formation which served specific purposes during various eras of the province's history: the juniorate at Daphne, the scholasticate at Spring Hill, and the novitiates at Metuchen, Belvidere, and New Orleans. Finally it touches upon the history of those schools in New York founded before 1960 as part of the United States Province.

This section of the book is arranged alphabetically by states and then chronologically within each state according to the date of the brothers' arrival in each city.

CHAPTER 12

CATHOLIC BOYS' HOME

Mobile, Alabama

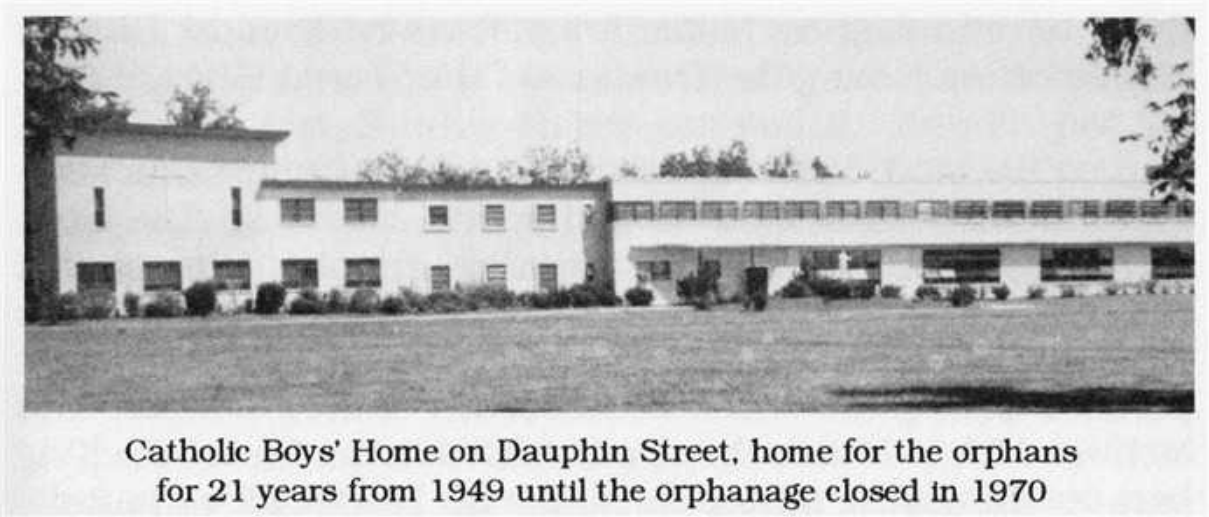
The story of the heroism, devotion, and sacrifice of the first five missionary brothers from France is well known as it has been recounted by Brother Macarius Pierce at length in *A Century of Service*. That story is also the beginning of the story of Catholic Boys' Home, formerly known as St. Vincent's Asylum for Boys, in Mobile, Alabama. The brothers began their work with 18 orphans in January 1847 at the corner of Warren and St. Francis streets. Eight months later, they moved to the corner of Charleston and Lawrence streets in St. Vincent's Parish where they remained almost 20 years.

In St. Vincent's Parish, the brothers set up their first headquarters and a type of novitiate as well as a day school which Brother David Boussuge started in the sacristy of the church with Father Patrick R. Hackett, the pastor. The brothers and orphans stayed at St. Vincent's until shortly after the Civil War. In 1866 they moved to Lafayette Street. The brothers then renamed the orphanage Industrial Gardens in keeping with their hopes of fulfilling their dream of setting up a technical training school. The Boys' Industrial School, as it became known, remained on Lafayette Street for 83 years.

In 1900 Bishop Edward P. Allen erected a large four-story house known as Bishop O'Sullivan Memorial which served as the orphanage on Lafayette Street until 1949. After almost 50 years of use, the building had become inadequate. Bishop Thomas J. Toolen, always a friend of the brothers and a great admirer of their work with the orphans, conducted a fundraising drive in Mobile for a new building. Here the story picks up where *A Century of Service* left off: *"The drive was a gratifying success. Encouraged by the generous response, the Bishop bought the Zimilich homestead, consisting of 37 acres of rich farmland, located on Dauphin Street, some distance from the present Asylum. On May 10, 1946, he broke ground for the new Catholic Boys' Home, that is to be erected as soon as conditions are favorable."* (*A Century of Service*, p. 111)

Two years later, on September 20, 1948, construction of a new building actually began under the direction of Monsignor Thomas M. Cullen, diocesan director of Catholic Charities. In August 1949, while the brothers and orphans enjoyed the summer months at Camp Coden on Mobile Bay, the old buildings which they had occupied for many years were demolished to prepare the site for

the construction of a new McGill Institute. On September 19, 1949, Brother Aquinas Vanderhoeven, director, led his staff of eight brothers and their orphans into their new home. *"The eyes of the boys literally popped when they entered the new Catholic Boys' Home. Beauty and utility beyond one's wildest hopes mark the newly erected building. For a length of over two hundred feet, the building of white brick rises through two stories. A beautiful chapel, a spotless kitchen and refectory, a spacious gymnasium, a bright dormitory, a well-equipped laundry, and numerous other facilities make the home a dream of convenience."* (*Province Monthly*, October 1949, p. 4)



Catholic Boys' Home on Dauphin Street, home for the orphans for 21 years from 1949 until the orphanage closed in 1970

On May 4, 1950, an impressive group of brothers, clergy, and lay men and women attended the dedication of the new Catholic Boys' Home (CBH) on Dauphin Street. Among the dignitaries were Brother Albertinus Juge, superior general; Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial superior; and Bishop William O'Conner of Springfield, Illinois, who gave the main address. Ceremonies began with a solemn pontifical Mass celebrated in the new chapel by the Most Rev. Thomas J. Toolen. Under the direction of Brother Ashton Brisolara and with the accompaniment of Brother James Mullen, the boys' choir impressed everyone with its rendition of Pietro Yon's *Mass of the Shepherds*. An open house followed a noon banquet for more than 100 guests.

Of course the main story of the orphanage is not that of the buildings, but of the people there. In 1951 Brother Aquinas, who had directed the orphanage for four years in a firm and fair manner, was replaced by Brother Romuald Robitaille who, after one year as administrator, turned it over to Brother Alban Tucker. Brother Alban proved to be an outstanding director. After six years, however, canon law required that he be replaced. During Brother Alban's tenure, the 100-bed dormitory and the four classrooms were almost always filled. Most of those years, CBH accommodated from 90 to 95 boys. Six other brothers

worked with Brother Alban; and they were kept very busy with classes, constant prefecting duties, and many other chores.

Ages of the boys at Catholic Boys' Home ranged from about eight to 18. Not all were true orphans. The orphanage accepted many of them because their family was poor, and the brothers offered them a good home and a good education. In fact, most of the boys had one or both parents still living, and the others usually had very close relatives nearby. The brothers taught the elementary school for Grades 5-8 on campus and brought the high school students back and forth to McGill Institute by means of the school bus.

Besides offering the boys a solid education, the brothers provided them with the comforts of home in an atmosphere of friendly discipline. They lived with the boys, worked with them, ate with them, prayed with them, and took recreation with them. This close contact provided a formation that led several of the young men to follow the brothers into religious life. Brothers Bernadine Leanman (NY), Hilbert Mooney, Aubert Rebman, and Anthon Miklic are a few who lived at CBH in Mobile before joining the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

The brothers at CBH provided a well-rounded education that included many musical and sports activities. The band earned itself an outstanding reputation and was often invited to perform at special religious, social, and civic events. Each year the boys looked forward to marching in about eight parades during the Mardi Gras season in New Orleans and Mobile. Also in Mobile they participated in the Christ the King parade, the Junior Miss parade, the St. Patrick's Day parade, and the Armed Forces Day parade. The band performed as well for the Toy Bowl Classic celebrations in Birmingham and homecoming events in Montgomery. Activities such as these encouraged the young musicians and motivated them to excel.

The boys at CBH also excelled in athletics. During the '50s, Brother Roy Reinecke's senior, junior, and midget teams in football and basketball often dominated the Parochial School League and the Catholic Youth Organization League. Catholic Boys' Home teams traditionally sent several outstanding players to the annual Mobile-Birmingham Toy Bowl Classic football competition. CBH always made an excellent showing at the annual Field Day events among the various parochial schools in the city.

Brother Martin, provincial during Brother Alban's tenure at CBH, wrote in his annual reports to Rome statements such as the following:

> *"Very fine community and fraternal spirit. The boys are well cared for and are well trained."* (March 15, 1953)

"The brothers are respected and esteemed by the clergy and the Bishop's representative who is almost a daily caller here. The chaplain speaks well of the Brothers." (Jan. 13, 1954)

The boys loved Brother Alban dearly. So did the benefactors. His only fault, according to Brother Martin, was that he was *"just too kind, if that be possible."* Brother Martin believed that Brother Alban tended to spoil the boys by showing them too many movies and offering them too many luxuries. In fact, Brother Martin concluded, *"They live just like RICH folks."* (Report, April 5, 1957) Brother Martin, of course, exaggerated, but his report clearly illustrated how much Brother Alban loved the orphans and how he went to any extent to assure their wellbeing.

The brothers at Catholic Boys' Home enjoyed the support of various charitable organizations in Mobile such as the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the Elks. These groups often sponsored dances, parties at Christmas time, and summer picnics for the boys. In addition, volunteer doctors, coaches, and craftsmen donated many services to help the brothers and their boys.

In 1958-59 Brother Loyola Mattingly replaced Brother Alban as director. The following year, Brother Leo Godin began a six-year tenure as director. He did an excellent job as director, according to the reports of Brother André Robichaud, provincial during his tenure. In a typical report, Brother André made the following comment about CBH: *"This place is a source of our blessings because of the charity we do. A well conducted home. Msgr. Cullen is highly pleased and we have the respect of Bishop Toolen. A happy, hardworking house. Brother Leo is doing an excellent job."* (May 8, 1960)

With more than 90 orphans, the orphanage continued to operate at capacity. The younger half still took classes on the campus on Dauphin Street while the older half went to McGill. The hardworking brothers referred to by the provincial were Brothers Leo Godin, Roy Reinecke, Louis Joseph Richard, and Joseph Donovan. These four brothers taught, prefected, coached, worked with the students to keep the house and grounds clean, produced vegetables in their garden, and raised several hundred chickens as well. Brother Valerian Specht, the fifth member of the community, suffered from old age and infirmities, but he modeled a devout religious life. The cheerful example of Brother Valerian, who spent his last 23 years with the orphans, was especially important in a place such as CBH where duties kept some of the younger brothers too busy to make every spiritual exercise. Brother Valerian's sympathetic and encouraging attitude

toward the boys easily won their hearts, and they flocked around him outside the classroom.

During the hot summer months, the brothers and boys moved to Coden in Bayou LaBatre, Alabama, where they enjoyed a camp on Mobile Bay. Brother Carlos Lohman, who joined the staff in 1960 and worked at CBH until his premature death at age 46 in 1969, especially enjoyed the summer months when he was director at Camp Coden. Many leisure time activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, and crabbing made the summer pass fast. Vacation time also provided the opportunity for the brothers to take the boys on excursions to nearby places such as Fort Walton Beach, New Orleans, Natchez, and Dauphin Island in the Gulf.

While the boys vacationed at Coden, teaching brothers taking summer courses at Spring Hill College sometimes resided at Catholic Boys' Home. Some summers more than 30 student brothers formed community at CBH. Often on the weekends, they would join the other brothers at Coden or they would go to the house at Daphne, Alabama, which served first as a scholasticate then as a juniorate. Also they took part in baseball tournaments during the summer at Spring Hill College. While the Jesuit philosophers and regents fielded a team, the playoffs usually pitted the CBH summer school brothers against the young brothers from the scholasticate.

During the last year of Brother Leo's six years as director, he had to hire a lay teacher to help out with the classes. The number of brothers available for CBH had been reduced to five, and Brother Valerian could no longer work. The 24-hour demand on the brothers' time by 86 boys in residence proved too much work for four men.

By 1966, when Brother Albert Ledet replaced Brother Leo as director, conditions at CBH had begun to change drastically.Society and the Church were undergoing tremendous changes, and these changes had a great impact on the orphanage. Brother Albert faced such difficult challenges as resistance to racial integration, implementing new policies concerning child-care services, and finding adequate funding. By early 1967 when Brother Alexis Klee, assistant general, made his canonical visitation, the enrollment at CBH had already dropped to only 47 boys. The modern trend of placing dependent youth in foster homes whenever possible rather than in institutions accounted for the decline.

In his canonical visitation report, April 1, 1967, Brother Alexis characterized Brother Albert Ledet, director, as *"a young and active man who governs well his house and his charges."* Brothers Andries Chayko and Raymond Sylve, a young brother, ably assisted Brother Albert. But the other three brothers

at CBH were seriously ill: Brothers Valerian Specht, Aquinas Vanderhoeven, and Carlos Lohman, who served as prefect of discipline in spite of his serious heart condition. Brother Alexis noted also that the institution, which depended on support from the diocesan office of Catholic Charities and the United Fund of the city of Mobile, had a revenue of only $64,000 in 1966. That was barely sufficient to operate the home. As a result, many planned improvements fell unfunded. The diocese paid a stipend of $2,100 a year for each brother. While that adequately supported the brothers' simple lifestyle, it did not provide the province with anything to set aside for future health care or retirement needs. Nor did it allow the brothers at CBH to contribute to the operational expenses of the province or to pay for their ongoing education and formation.

Right after Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, made his semiannual visitation in 1967, he began to discuss with the provincial council some of the difficulties developing at CBH. He focused on the personnel changes requested by diocesan officials. He concluded that the province did *"not have men qualified to take care of today's orphanages (there are only two real orphans) as the head of Catholic Charities wishes."* (Report, February 1, 1968) The province simply did not have the personnel ready to undergo the special training in sociology and psychology to meet the new work requirements of such an institution. The college courses that the brothers took in child and adolescent psychology did not suffice, even though they were supplemented by participation in numerous workshops offered by the State Conference on Social Work.

Furthermore, Brother Hubert had real doubts as to whether directing orphanages should be one of the brothers' primary apostolates – a concern shared by Brother Polycarp, superior general, when he first sent the brothers to take over the orphanage in Mobile. In fact, in 1846 Brother Polycarp wrote to Monsignor John Bazin, vicar general for Bishop Michael Portier, that *"our Institute does not have as its purpose the direction of orphanages; but its spirit and the proposals of the Bishop of Mobile allow us, I think, to take this means to achieve our true end which is the religious education of youth."* He was responding to Monsignor Bazin's letter of June 6, 1846, in which the vicar general promised Brother Polycarp that if he sent five brothers to take over the orphanage, in a few years the brothers could have a flourishing novitiate in Mobile. He added that it was *"the intention of Bishop Portier to confide the schools of the city to your brothers as soon as they know enough English."*

Brother Hubert consulted his provincial council in February 1968, and then met with the Rev. Thomas Weise, diocesan director of Social Services, to discuss two main problems at CBH: the lack of special training necessary on the

part of the brothers and the existing conditions which denied the brothers the authority to control who entered or left the home. More and more of the young people placed at Catholic Boys' Home suffered from serious problems of maladjustment or were court cases that required special handling. Higher authorities made and passed down more and more decisions affecting the brothers' work. For example, Monsignor Thomas Nunan, diocesan director of Catholic Charities, decided there would be no classes offered at Catholic Boys' Home beginning with the 1967-68 school year. The students would attend classes at several local parochial schools. The brothers felt that the home was becoming more of a correctional than an instructional institution, and they were not professionally trained for such work. Also, the free and easy exchange that they had enjoyed with Bishop Thomas Toolen and Monsignor Tom Cullen had given way to a more much bureaucratic approach, more typical of governmental regulatory agencies.

Though frustrated for many reasons, the brothers remained reluctant to leave Catholic Boys' Home. One reason was that the brothers had worked with the orphans in Mobile for more than 120 years, ever since the brothers' first arrival in America. Another reason was that the orphanage represented a concrete expression of the brothers' desire to work with the poor and disadvantaged. After Brother Hubert's meeting with Father Weise and in consultation with Brother Albert, it was agreed that the diocese would hire a professional administrator for the Home. Thus, on November 7, 1968, Mr. John Anderson took over as the director of CBH; Brother Albert remained as religious superior of the brothers for one more year. Brother Ramon Daunis replaced him as superior in 1969, and six brothers continued to work at the orphanage.

But the arrangement with the diocese did not address the basic problems; it only delayed the brothers' decision to withdraw. The provincial council unanimously agreed on April 10, 1970, that the brothers should withdraw from Catholic Boys' Home in Mobile. The council determined that the real needs of the 36 boys then living at the home could be met better by social agencies than by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Conditions beyond the control of the province and the diocese made such a decision unavoidable. The Most Rev. John L. May, Bishop of Mobile at the time, expressed his sentiments in a letter to Brother Hubert, dated May 14, 1970:

"I am sorry to have to express my consent to the withdrawal of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart from their good work at the Catholic Boys' Home of Mobile. I am sure we both regret this inevitable decision because of the close association we have had with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart for well over a

century here in Mobile. I have heard many such expressions of regret from our people, many of whom have been beneficiaries of the Brothers at Catholic Boys' Home. We will always be in your debt."

With the withdrawal of the brothers, the diocese closed Catholic Boys' Home and leased the buildings to Mobile Gas Corporation. Boys from northern Alabama were transferred to the Birmingham Diocese for care closer to home. The grade-school boys stayed in Mobile and moved to St. Mary's Home on Moffat Road, a home run by the Daughters of Charity. In an expression of gratitude for the brothers' long service, friends honored them with a reception held at the Catholic Boys' Home on June 7, 1970. Many brothers who had been assigned to the orphanage over the years traveled to Mobile for the occasion.

Brother Roy Reinecke, who had worked 16 years at CBH as teacher and prefect, reminisced on his days there: *"It was the most wonderful place in the world for many reasons. The nature of the work itself just made one so happy to be of help to boys who really needed help. The cooperation and appreciation of the boys was most fulfilling as well as the later success of so many of the boys in finding their place in society, in business, and in making such wonderful homes for their families. And finally the wholehearted cooperation of so many groups and individuals in really making CBH a home for the boys was always so heartwarming."*

Happy stories of the life at Catholic Boys' Home still abound today. One such story is that of Mr. Robert Graham, whose life exemplified the love and loyalty he learned from the brothers. Robert lived at CBH from 1938 to 1970, first as an orphan and then as a worker until it closed. Afterwards he continued to live with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart for the rest of his life, working in the laundry at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis. He was thrilled in 1980 when he was named an honorary brother. Following his death in 1990, he was buried alongside the brothers in their cemetery at Bay St. Louis. Robert, a small person, had to wear leg braces to walk. He once fondly recalled how Brother Aquinas helped him through the difficult period of learning to live with braces: *"I can remember when I was just learning to wear braces that Brother Aquinas would carry me to the pier at Camp Coden so that I could go swimming. Then, again, when I had a hernia, Brother Aquinas had boys carry me up the stairs until I got well."* Robert Graham had a great love for the brothers ever since his earliest days at the orphanage. For him and for so many others, *"the brothers were like daddies to the boys there."* Robert lived the lessons he learned, spreading smiles and good cheer among all he met.

CHAPTER 13

McGILL-TOOLEN HIGH SCHOOL

Mobile, Alabama

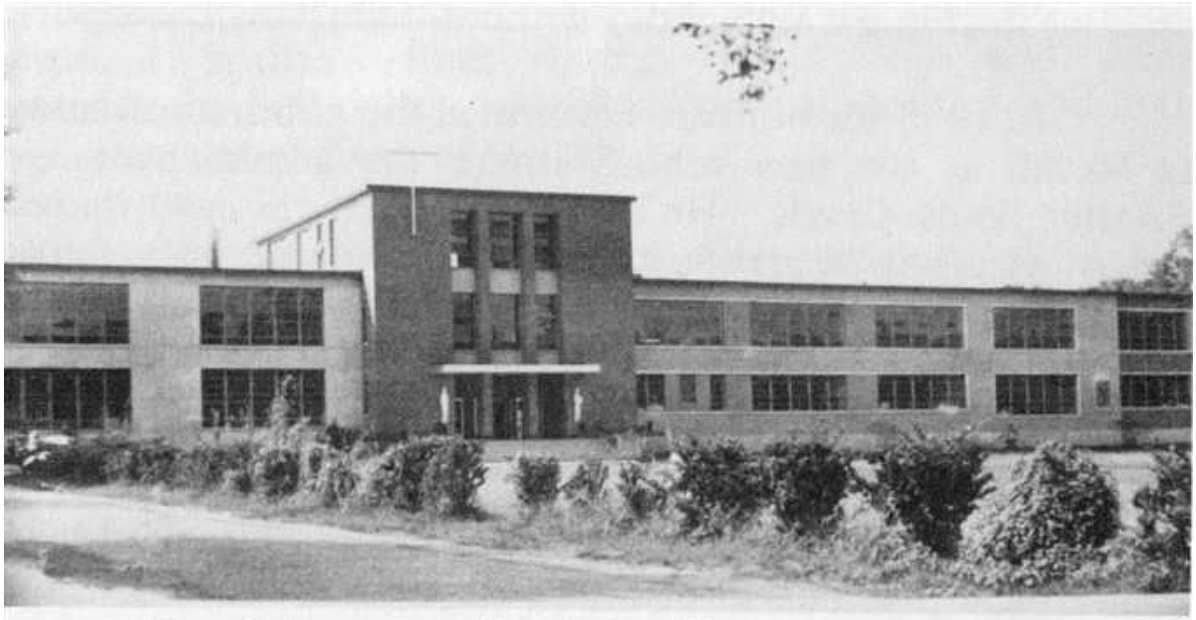
At the invitation of the Most Rev. Thomas J. Toolen, Bishop of Mobile, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart assumed administration of McGill Institute in 1928. The school had been founded in 1896 by Mr. Felix McGill in fulfillment of his late brother Arthur's dream to endow a nonsectarian high school for boys, especially those without means. He bought the old Chandler home at 252 Government Street in downtown Mobile, enlarged it, and converted it into an impressive classical school with huge Doric columns in front. He then invited the Catholic diocese to manage it. In 1897 the Rev. John Daly, the school's first rector, accepted 110 boys and hired two laymen to teach them. A member of that first class, Richard Gerow, later became Bishop of Natchez.

When Bishop Toolen succeeded Bishop Edward P. Allen in 1927, he had a strong desire to put the school under the management a religious congregation to give it more stability and to assure that it offered students formation as well as instruction. He naturally turned to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, who had earned an excellent reputation for educating and forming youth during their 80 years in Mobile. The brothers happily accepted the bishop's offer to administer and staff McGill. Not only did McGill symbolize the fulfillment of Brother Polycarp's dream and Bishop Michael Portier's promise in 1846 that the brothers would direct Catholic schools in Mobile, but also it fit in well with the brothers' mission. Thanks to the school's endowment fund, the brothers could accept and teach high school students unable to pay tuition.

From the very beginning of the brothers' presence at McGill Institute in 1928, the province assigned some of its best teachers there. Brother Macarius Pierce, its first brother principal, had already earned a reputation as an outstanding educator. Among the four brothers he brought with him were two young, energetic, and devoted religious Brothers Martin Hernandez and Ignatius Anderson. Besides teaching, they expanded the extracurricular activities that the brothers considered essential for a total education. Brother Martin built up the athletic program, and Brother Ignatius took over the school newspaper, *The McGillian*, which had just started in 1928. These brothers offered their time and expertise to motivate the students to excel. Many honors would later come to the school through the journalism and sports programs.

Brother Macarius was succeeded as principal, in turn, by Brothers Ignatius Anderson, Gerald Coridan, Claver Thomas, Basil Harrington, William Sharkey, and once more Gerald Coridan in 1947. Firm believers in the necessity of extracurricular activities, these principals expanded the school's programs, placing high priority on the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart and the Sodality of Mary. They introduced a music program and established a student advisory board to help coordinate student activities. Enrollment surged as McGill became recognized as an outstanding school under the brothers' administration. The school enjoyed the total support of Bishop Toolen. After assuring that Catholic education was available and affordable, he decreed in 1937 that all Catholics in Mobile must send their children to Catholic schools.

In 1944 Bishop Toolen and Brother Basil started a fund drive for a new McGill Institute to be built on Old Shell Road between Catherine and Lafayette streets. When the bishop blessed and broke ground for the new school on May 10, 1945, he praised the brothers: *"All during the past century they have formed and fashioned boys who are a credit to God and country."* A wing of six classrooms, soon built at the site, alleviated the serious problem of overcrowding. In 1946 four brothers taught 120 freshmen on Old Shell Road while nine brothers remained downtown with 280 older boys.



View of the new McGill High School facing Old Shell Road

Brother Roland Smith relieved Brother Gerald as principal in 1949. He was overjoyed when finally in December 1950 bids were taken to finish constructing the new school. The Peyton Higgison Company of Mobile won the contract for $1,075,000. The additional buildings, designed by architect John J. Carey, included 36 classrooms, laboratories, music rooms, offices, a library, a

gymnasium, a cafeteria, and a kitchen. The main building facing Old Shell Road comprised a three-story central section with two-story wings on each side.

The "Old McGill" on Government Street graduated its last class of 78 seniors in May 1952. In September, all McGill students attended classes at the ultramodern school on Old Shell Road. In contrast to the drab overcrowded classrooms downtown, the new ones were large and airy with pleasant color schemes. Spacious science labs for biology, chemistry, and physics came well-equipped. The cafeteria was constructed large enough to accommodate the girls from Bishop Toolen High School across the street. McGill students welcomed the girls; although not allowed to eat with them, they delighted in sneaking looks through the classroom doors to watch the girls parade down the hallway to the cafeteria.

For the official dedication of the new school on December 18, 1952, the outstanding public speaker Bishop Fulton J. Sheen delivered the keynote address on the value of a Catholic education. The building campaign, which Bishop Toolen had referred to as *"perhaps the greatest venture in the whole history of the Mobile diocese"* when he blessed the site seven years earlier, was finally completed. The $1.4 million construction project included facilities for the athletic, drama, and music programs. The large gymnasium with a seating capacity for more than 1,000 spectators had spacious locker rooms beneath the stands. Also it included a large stage and a projection booth. A soundproof room enabled the band to practice during the school day without disturbing classes.

In 1953 the brothers celebrated their 25th anniversary at McGill at the new school, under the administration of Brother Louis Cavell. He motivated them *"to mold Catholic gentlemen, to provide priestly and religious vocations, and to furnish Catholic leaders for the lay apostolate."* (*Province Monthly*, May 1954, p. 3) In addition to the school, the brothers enjoyed their new home, a two-story brick building behind the cafeteria wing on Catherine Street. They especially appreciated the air-conditioned chapel with an outside access so that students could share its use. Most importantly, the new large residence allowed the province to increase the number of brothers at McGill from 12 to 18.

With the ever expanding student population at McGill, Monsignor Leo M. Byrnes, superintendent of Catholic schools, allowed the brothers to hire laymen to teach and help with the athletic and music programs. Messrs. Ray Dicharry and Jack Fellis assisted Brother Dacian LeBlanc, athletic director, with coaching responsibilities. They added tennis, golf, and track to the Yellow Jackets' program which had gained prominence by winning numerous championships in basketball, baseball, and football. Mr. Clem Toca took

direction of the McGill band in 1952. Under his direction, the band brought many honors to McGill, consistently earning superior ratings in state competition. In 1955, Mrs. Eleanor Benz, the first woman to join the McGill faculty, began her outstanding career of more than 40 years as school librarian.

The brothers set the religious tone of the school. Besides blessing the hour at the beginning of each class period, they assured a religious atmosphere by providing for First Friday Masses, weekly confessions, senior retreats, days of recollection for all students, enthronement of the Sacred Heart in students' homes, hosting of annual conventions of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, and participation in the Catholic Student Mission Crusade. Annually during Lent, students contributed to aid the foreign missions. The brothers' efforts were enhanced by diocesan priests whom the bishop assigned to the faculty to assist in teaching religion. Young student brothers from Spring Hill College and Jesuit scholastics doing their student teaching at McGill added to the religious atmosphere of McGill.

Enrollment had reached 570 when Brother Mark Thornton began a four-year tenure as principal of McGill in 1954. Under his outstanding administration, the school flourished. He firmly established its reputation as one of the best educational institutions in the South. Noted for his quiet and friendly discipline, as well as his tact and politeness in dealing with people, Brother Mark earned wide respect and admiration. He tackled head-on one of the most serious problems distracting McGill students from their studies: the fraternities.

A long-standing social tradition in Mobile, fraternities had gotten out of hand; their hazing pranks sometimes resulted in serious injuries. School authorities had no direct control over these fraternities since they were not school-sponsored. But Brother Mark, with the support of Archbishop Toolen, courageously banned McGill students from joining them. To fill the void left in the lives of the students, Brother Mark assured that McGill offered a full array of social, religious, and athletic activities.

A wide variety of student organizations such as the Literary Club, the Library Club, the Photo Club, the Art Club, the Debate Club, the Math Club, and the Science Club began during this period of the '50s. In spite of so many activities, academics retained top priority. Three-fourths of McGill's seniors consistently ranked in the top quarter of the nation, and the school frequently counted five national merit finalists among its seniors. With the introduction of the space age, the brothers emphasized math and science in the school curriculum. Some of the outstanding science teachers at McGill in the '50s were Brothers Fidelis Bragg, David Toups, Walter Doyle, More Schaefer, and Cyr Balaney. As senior math and physics teacher, Brother Cyr was named *Best*

Science Teacher in Alabama. His students consistently won ribbons in regional, state, and even the national science fairs in Oklahoma City in 1955 and in Hartford in 1959.

In 1959 Brother Flavian Udinksy replaced Brother Mark as principal at McGill. By this time the enrollment, which averaged over 700, had already outgrown the new building. In 1956 the first graduating class from the new school numbered a record 112 students. Additional construction completed in 1959 allowed McGill to accommodate up to 800 students by doubling the size of the library and providing four classrooms and a large typing room. The size of the staff, however, was not increased. Nineteen brothers and eight lay teachers taught 792 students. Brother Flavian, a firm believer in the model schools program, introduced the concept of team teaching at McGill; but an overworked staff severely limited its implementation.

When Brother André Robichaud, provincial superior, made his official visitation of McGill in April of 1960, he noted that McGill boasted *"our strongest faculty. . . but the brothers work under hard conditions made by the superintendent."* (Provincial's report, April 29, 1960) A number of brothers felt that Monsignor J. Edwin Stuardi, superintendent of Catholic schools, did not fully appreciate how much they were overworked. They knew, however, that to hire more lay teachers would have cost the diocese much more money. At the time, the annual stipend for each of the 19 brothers was less than $1,300. With more lay teachers, tuition, which had remained minimal throughout the years, would increase.

When Brother Mark returned as principal in 1961, he set about right away to remedy the situation of so many brothers being terribly overloaded. For the 1962-63 school year, 18 lay men and one woman complemented the faculty of 19 brothers. Six women worked in the office, library, and cafeteria. With more teachers, Brother Mark expanded the curriculum to offer Latin III, Spanish III, and physical science as an alternative to general science. Also in 1962, he established a six-member guidance department under the direction of Brother Rene LeBlanc and Mr. Cleve Ros. Brother Victor Bendillo, moderator of the Vocation Club, helped organize homeroom sections for group guidance. Also three priests, who taught part-time, offered students personal guidance one period a day.

In 1963 Brother Foster Zibilich began his 10-year tenure as principal at McGill. He was very familiar with the school, having served as assistant principal since 1958. The student body increased to 976 students in 1964. Due to overcrowding at Bishop Toolen High School, girls began taking classes in

physics, biology, math, and world literature at McGill. Brother Foster added several more men and women to the McGill faculty; and for the first time since the brothers arrived at McGill, lay teachers outnumbered them, 25 to 19.

One of the 19 brothers at McGill lived into his nineties. Brother Ilbertus Aulagnier, French missionary and educator at McGill for 32 years, died at the age of 90 on May 25, 1965. In honor of this *"Grand Old Man of McGill,"* the Brother Ilbertus Chapter of the National Honor Society was chartered at McGill in November 1963 with the induction of 21 juniors and seniors. During his long career, Brother Ilbertus directed six establishments of the brothers. Many brothers described this saintly man as the best director they ever had. In the twilight of his life, his kindness and gentleness endeared him to McGill students who got generous doses of his cheerfulness in the school bookstore which he operated. A bronze plaque commemorating Brother Ilbertus has been mounted in the school's main hallway.

In 1966-67, the brothers separated the position of principal at McGill from that of director of the brothers' community since each job had become more and more demanding. Brother Dacian LeBlanc became religious superior, freeing the principal, Brother Foster, to participate in educational programs on a national and international level. Brother Foster served on the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Committee on International Programs. In 1968, the association selected him as one of 25 administrators to study school systems in England, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union during a 19-day educational tour.

In 1970-71 Brother Foster introduced flexible modular scheduling of classes at McGill. Similar scheduling at Bishop Toolen High School allowed the two schools to share personnel and facilities more readily. Besides an exchange of teachers, the two schools shared chairpersons for some departments. A newly built air-conditioned and carpeted library at McGill served both schools. Such resource sharing permitted Brother Foster to expend funds in other areas and to introduce computer programming classes that year.

In the summer of 1971, in an effort to live a more simple lifestyle as called for by Vatican II and to experiment with small-group living in religious life, Brother Foster moved from the brothers' large residence at 60 North Catherine Street. He lived with several other brothers in a small apartment at 1005 Dauphin Street. Bishop John L. May, who succeeded Archbishop Toolen in 1969 when the latter retired, found Brother Foster's move difficult to understand. On January 25, 1971, he wrote to Brother Mark, provincial, to express his misgivings. But for the 1971-72 school year, Brother Foster continued to reside off-campus in a small community at 1001 Old Shell Place.

Not only did Brother Foster participate in religious life experiments as encouraged by Vatican II, but also he involved himself in social justice movements of the period. His tenure as principal at McGill coincided with the turbulent times of civil rights demonstrations, school desegregation, the Vietnam War, and the peace movement. His efforts on behalf of racial integration went far beyond organizing an African-American Historical and Cultural Society at McGill. To the chagrin of many solid Catholics, some brothers and clergy included, he marched in parades in the city's streets on behalf of civil rights.

In 1972 Brother Foster moved back into the school residence but continued to speak out prophetically on social justice issues, even when topics touched sensitive areas in the diocese. The question of stipends for religious was one such issue. The bishop found himself in the middle between the Mobile Board of Catholic Education and the pastors of parish schools. The board proposed a staggered increase in stipends for religious for each of five years, starting at $3,400 in 1973. Bishop John May vetoed the board's action and supported the pastors who opted for the *status quo* of $2,400, open to negotiation at the school level. Brother Foster favored paying religious at least 50 percent of the lay teachers' salary scale since health care and retirement needs of brothers and sisters had skyrocketed. As was the case with most religious congregations, the number of brothers available to work had drastically declined while their average age continued to climb. In 1971-72, for example, only nine brothers worked at McGill. Yet their donated service to the school equaled $54,400 the difference between their small annual stipend and their salary as based on the regular scale.

The school year 1972-73 was not only the last of Brother Foster's 10 years as principal at McGill, but it was also the final year of administration by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. In 1973 McGill Institute and Bishop Toolen High School merged to form McGill-Toolen High School. Under the new structure, the brothers no longer named the principal. Brother Foster applied for the position, but he was not named. The Rev. William Friend, diocesan superintendent, wrote to Brother Mark, provincial, that *"Brother Foster had been in the top running of applicants"* and that *"the Brothers of the Sacred Heart are certainly always most welcome in the consolidated school and it is my hope and prayer that they will remain through the years, so that the tradition of their dedication and witness will continue."* (Letter, March 7, 1973). Some brothers found it difficult to remain at the school without a brother as principal. Some even suspected that politics had come into play in the selection process. But the brothers loved the students at McGill-Toolen and knew that they not only were loved in return, but

also needed. So they stayed. Brother Foster, more than ready for a sabbatical, began his doctoral work in education.

Thus, a new chapter in the history of the brothers in Mobile began in 1973-74 at McGill-Toolen with seven brothers on the staff led by Sister Mary Alda Balthrop, RSM, principal. The consolidated coeducational school of over 1,500 students combined the outstanding traditions of both schools and continued to excel in many activities. Brother James Roussell's golf team and Brother Fidelis Bragg's weightlifting club both won numerous honors. The quiz bowl team went undefeated. The National Catholic Educational Association ranked the McGill-Toolen band the best in Catholic schools. The boys' basketball team captured the regional title and went to the state finals for a third straight year. Also in 1973, the girls' volleyball team, coached by Mrs. Becky Dickinson, won the district title for the 6th year in a row. Between 1969 and 1994, the *Dirty Dozen* volleyball teams went undefeated three times and won 16 area championships and 11 state titles, posting an almost incredible win-loss record of 1,043 to 96.

In 1974-75 Mr. Wayne Merritt became the first lay principal at McGill-Toolen. A close friend of the brothers, he enjoyed their total support. While no longer directing the school, the brothers felt the need to offer it a certain stability. They continued to touch the lives of students personally, giving them a sense of direction. Many students, for example, sought out Brother Victor Bendillo, a mainstay at McGill since 1959, for counseling. During Wayne Merritt's administration, two ordained brothers served on the faculty, Brother Carl Evans from 1976 to 1982, and then Brother Vincent Bono until 1988. Besides helping with liturgical services for the students, they served as school chaplains and members of the campus ministry department. They organized student retreats, days of recollection, class Masses, and Vocation Awareness Days.

In September 1979 Hurricane Frederic struck Mobile, but the brothers' house escaped with almost no damage other than loss of power and phones. In response to a donation sent by the province to hurricane victims in the diocese, Bishop John May wrote Brother Lee Barker, provincial, to thank him. He added a handwritten note at the bottom of his letter to express his gratitude for the many years of service of the brothers: *"The Brothers of the Sacred Heart have given us so much for so long! We will never forget."* (Letter, September 27, 1979)

After Bishop John May was named Archbishop of St. Louis, Monsignor Oscar H. Lipscomb, a McGill graduate, was appointed Archbishop of Mobile on November 16, 1980. Brother Lee wrote to Archbishop Lipscomb to ask him

how the four brothers on the faculty of McGill-Toolen could best serve the diocese. He responded immediately, urging that they remain in the school. Archbishop Lipscomb stated: *"Unless there is a solidly committed core group of Catholics who live their faith well and from which the vocations and commitment to leadership in almost every field can be drawn, the work of Christ's Kingdom on earth suffers and suffers deeply. It seems that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart are engaged in their very important work of education in giving those gifts, values, and insights that result in the solid formation in the Catholic faith that is necessary before any other area of activity becomes possible."* (Letter, Nov. 12, 1981) The archbishop again recalled how his homeroom teacher, Brother Warren Laudumiey, influenced him so positively when he was a student at McGill in the late '40s.

Thus, the brothers continued to contribute to the religious and academic tone of the school. In 1984 Brother Matthias Amos, a native of Mobile from St. Mary's Parish, was named local superior. He had taught at McGill since 1978. Besides being renowned as an outstanding physics teacher, he moderated a Key Club that won many awards for its community-service projects. He was voted *Teacher of the Year* at McGill-Toolen and was named Key Club Moderator of the Year in the State of Alabama. Along with Brother Malcolm Melcher, a McGill graduate and teacher of chemistry and religion, Brother Matthias carried on the tradition of brothers helping students excel in science. Their students won many honors at regional fairs and at Science Olympiad competitions in Mobile and New Orleans.

As the school continued to boast an outstanding academic record in the '80s, it remained true to the direction given it by the brothers in the '20s. Cocurricular activities, still considered essential, supplemented the academic program. McGill-Toolen students could choose to participate in one or more of the school's 24 clubs, 21 athletic teams for boys, and 17 teams for girls. In recognition of this tradition and in honor of his work in building the athletic program, the school inducted Brother Martin Hernandez, one of the first five brothers at McGill in 1928, into its Yellow Jacket Hall of Fame on October 19, 1985.

In 1989 the Rev. Bry Shields was named president of McGill-Toolen High School, replacing the principal, Mr. Wayne Merritt, as its chief administrator. The following year, Father Shields also became principal. From then until 1995, seven brothers resided on Catherine Street. Two of them worked at McGill-Toolen. Brother Paul Mulligan, local superior since 1988, taught classes, served as dean of students, and coached tennis. Four of his tennis teams won the district championship, and his 1990 team took third place in state competition. Brother

Victor Bendillo, a popular counselor for 35 years at the school, continued to guide its youth.

Three brothers retired in Mobile. Brother Alcuin Kelly retired in 1982 after teaching 24 years at McGill. During his long career, he taught French, social studies, art, and mechanical drawing which he introduced into the curriculum. The two other retired brothers, Brothers Anthon Miklic and John Moore, had attended McGill as students. Brother Anthon, well remembered as an all-city tackle on the 1934 McGill football team, died in Mobile on December 7, 1995, at the age of 78. Two other brothers in residence, both with doctoral degrees in education, Brothers Flavian Udinsky and Celestine Algero, worked at Spring Hill College. Brother Celestine, a full professor, taught, supervised interns, and oversaw the teacher-certification program at Spring Hill.

In 1996 the Brothers of the Sacred Heart proudly joined with the people of Mobile in celebrating McGill's centennial.

CHAPTER 14

SACRED HEART JUNIORATE

Daphne, Alabama

To relieve the overcrowded conditions at the house of formation in Metuchen, New Jersey, the province looked for another site somewhere in the South. On December 18, 1947, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart bought an antebellum home standing on a picturesque 22-acre tract of land located on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay in Daphne, Alabama. The design and character of the large 1½-story mansion, built in 1833 as *The Howard Hotel*, reflected its Creole architectural style. An attractive eight-foot-wide covered gallery stretched across the entire front of the house. The brothers paid John and Ella Morrill $57,500 for the property. Its old house was set high on a gentle slope overlooking the bay and was framed by majestic oak trees draped with Spanish moss. Secluded in a wooded area abounding with pines, magnolias, and cedars, as well as many old oak trees, the property offered great potential. Besides the woods, it included almost 700 feet of sandy beach and some relatively flat terrain for playing fields. Once renovated, the antebellum house would serve well as a juniorate for high school students in the South. Daphne, a small community about 10 miles across the causeway from downtown Mobile, provided an ideal setting for a house of formation for boys interested in becoming brothers.

After a team of brothers renovated the house during the summer of 1948, the downstairs area of the main building included a foyer, a chapel, a study hall, a classroom, two dining rooms, a kitchen, two bedrooms, and two bathrooms. A beautiful stairway led to the large second-floor dormitory. A series of three small alcoves on each side provided room for closets that were tucked into the eaves of the building. At one end of the dormitory, the brothers installed toilet and lavatory facilities. In back of the main house, near the kitchen, they set up headquarters for a director's office, a bedroom, and a bath. Thus, the house of formation at Daphne was ready to receive its first group in September 1948.

From 1948 to 1950, the house at Daphne served the brothers attending college while a scholasticate was being built at Spring Hill. The first group of scholastics arrived September 3, after visiting their families. After first vows, a second group left Metuchen on September 8 to head to Daphne. Their newly appointed scholastic master, Brother Ignatius Anderson, accompanied them in the St. Stanislaus bus, chauffeured by Brothers Romuald Robitaille and Leo Godin. Student brothers at Daphne numbered 22 for the school year 1948-49. With Father Andrew Smith, SJ, dean of Spring Hill College, Brother Ignatius and Brother Alexis Klee mapped out a course of studies for these brothers. A staff of Brothers Ignatius, Bernard Tunney, and William Sharkey, later replaced by Brother Louis Cavell, taught some classes at Daphne. The scholastics also took courses at Spring Hill College, traveling back and forth by bus. A routine of prayer, work, and study quickly established itself in the homey atmosphere at Daphne.

View of the Sacred Heart Juniorate at Daphne from the semicircular driveway

More than 400 friends, religious, and clergy attended the open house at Sacred Heart Scholasticate, Sunday, October 17, 1948. A beautiful six-foot solid bronze statue of the Sacred Heart, a Daprato production from Italy, was set on an equally tall pedestal near the semicircular driveway leading to the house. This statue, donated by Mr. and Mrs. John and Ella Morrill in memory of their daughter, Mrs. Mary Morrill Jackson, presently overlooks DiBoll Plaza at St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

In 1948 under the capable direction of Brother Ignatius, the scholastics started the publication *The Brothers of the Sacred Heart*, commonly called *The*

Province Monthly, a magazine for the brothers and their friends. This scholasticate publication continued for 21 years until 1968. In the August 1949 issue of *The Province Monthly*, one of the brothers described the scholasticate as *"the realization of a dream – a dream of providing a lengthened period of religious and professional training for our young Brothers, a dream of establishing a House of Studies in the Southland, a dream of possessing a foundation symbolic of our aspirations as a corps of cultured, professional, religious gentlemen."* (*Province Monthly*, 2:12, p. 2)

In October work began on an auxiliary building to provide a laundry room, a workshop, a block of showers and toilets, and garages for a car, truck, and bus. In March the scholastics started using these much-needed facilities with the garages serving initially as storage rooms. By then two of the scholastics, Brothers Joachim Parr and Norman Champagne, had been called out to teach in emergency situations. In the meantime, plans advanced for the construction of a new scholasticate; but it would not be ready for another year. So the scholasticate stayed at Daphne in 1949-50 with Brothers Ignatius, Claver Thomas, and Cyrus Harrington on its staff.

In his first circular letter as provincial, Brother Martin Hernandez announced that as of September 1950 the house of studies in Daphne would become Sacred Heart Juniorate and would receive recruits from the South in Grades 9-11. Seniors would go to the house of studies at Metuchen, New Jersey, which would continue to offer candidates in the North four years of high school.

To accommodate the anticipated number of high school candidates, the brothers enlarged the chapel at Daphne. In back of the main house, they constructed a new recreation hall. Also they cleared a large field in the rear of the property and leveled it for a baseball diamond and a football field. Two new basketball courts were blacktopped. Later, to complete the recreational facilities, Brothers Felician Fourrier, Leo Godin, and Roland Smith constructed a 600-foot pier to make swimming and fishing in the bay easier for the brothers and candidates at the juniorate. This pier lasted until Hurricane Hilda destroyed all but about 20 feet of it on October 4, 1964.

When classes opened in September 1950, only 16 candidates in Grades 9-11 entered. Two of them left during the year, but such departures were normal since the juniorate was a preparatory school for young men to discern their religious vocation. Brother Camille Breaux, postulant master, guided their discernment.All candidates were referred to as *postulants*, even though, canonically speaking, they became postulants for only the last six months of their senior year, just before starting the novitiate. All students at the juniorate

were called *juniors*, regardless of their grade. Brothers Albert Guarino, Alban Tucker, and Nelson LaRose completed the first teaching staff. A classical curriculum offered the basic subjects for college preparation. Brother Florent Favier, a retired French brother, later joined the staff and taught the boys a few basics in vegetable gardening.

Guardian angel was the name given to a junior assigned to help incoming students adjust to the juniorate routine. *Rigorous* best describes the daily schedule for candidates at the juniorate in 1950. Rising was at 5 a.m. Morning prayer began at 5:20 a.m., followed by a half hour of meditation followed by Mass. After a hearty breakfast at 7 a.m., the juniors did house chores in silence. Classes started at 8:15 a.m. After a noon lunch, a short recess afforded the boys an opportunity to play tennis, handball, or stickball. Some simply relaxed until classes resumed. Classes ended at 3 p.m., and organized team sports followed. All candidates, even those not athletically inclined, participated by requirement in baseball, basketball, softball, and touch football. In warm weather, swimming was a favorite recreational activity after school.

Following afternoon activities and showers, candidates prayed the rosary at 5 p.m. and then made an examination of conscience to review the day. Supper, always at 6 p.m., was followed by more house chores, again in silence. Then came community recreation such as cards, pool, or ping-pong. A short spiritual session given by the master often preceded the study period at 7:30 p.m. Retirement took place after night prayer at 9 p.m. At that time began the period of great silence to be strictly honored until the master said *Deo Gratis* at breakfast the next morning. Thus, the daily schedule provided little free time. And everything was done in the group, according to the maxim: *"Never one, seldom two, always three or more."*

On Wednesdays and Saturdays, classes met in the morning only, and the afternoon was devoted to work to keep the house and grounds in good shape. Besides cutting grass, planting flowers, landscaping, raking leaves, and working in the vegetable garden, candidates learned how to paint indoors and out, sew, cut hair, and do any number of odd jobs such as plucking chickens and painting flagpoles.

Weekends and special occasions provided the juniors with some leisure time for personal hobbies and recreational activities. In general, the juniors received family visits once each quarter, and they went home for short vacations at Christmas and during the summer. Holidays at Daphne offered opportunities for picnics on the beach, boating and water skiing, hikes to the nearby sea-cliffs, or other outings. Another type of special occasion at Daphne was a *jubilee*.

Unique to the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, a jubilee is a natural phenomenon in which crabs, shrimp, flounders, and other fish are temporarily stunned by a lack of sufficient oxygen in the shallow water and scramble to escape. To their chagrin, the juniors rarely managed to cash in on the jubilees that occurred occasionally along their beachfront in the wee hours of the morning. Local people who read the signs of wind and water waited in preparation and easily filled baskets with seafood in just a few minutes. Often the juniors arrived on the beach after morning Mass just in time to see those who had arrived earlier carrying off tubs full of crabs and flounders.

During the first few years of operation, the juniorate staff underwent frequent changes, usually to accommodate other schools when brothers fell sick. In 1951-52, Brother Albert Guarino served as postulant master the first semester; Brother Bernard Tunney replaced him the second semester when he left for Africa. The staff included Brothers Nelson, Alban, Florent, and, for part of the year, Brothers Patrick McDonough, Yvo Sullivan, and Ignatius Anderson. For the school year 1952-53, Brother Camille Breaux, having completed the grand novitiate in Rome, returned as postulant master. Serving with him were Brothers Nelson, Florent, Loyola Mattingly, and Finian Howe, a popular community cook whose forgetfulness and unusual antics were legendary.

Classes at the juniorate remained small; students in all three grades usually totaled about 20. Brother Ashton Brisolara, vocation director, coordinated the recruiting efforts of the brothers and boosted the number of students at Daphne to 25 in 1955, and to 33 in 1956. To accommodate the increase and to improve the facilities, the brothers constructed a new wing on the east side of the recreation building. This provided a spacious study hall and a small dormitory.

Frequent staff changes continued. In 1956-57 Brother Loyola became director of the community; Brother Camille remained as postulant master. Brother Warren Laudumiey joined the staff that year. The following year, Brother Lee Barker replaced Brother Camille as postulant master, and Brother Noel Lemmon joined the staff. Beginning with the school year 1958-59, Brother Lee became director as well as postulant master, and Brothers Eldon Crifasi and Rian Messonnier joined the teaching staff. Brother Warren returned to Daphne after a short absence to replace Brother Eldon. With the arrival of Brother Cecil Hebert and the continued presence of Brothers Lee, Noel, Rian, and Warren, the teaching staff at the juniorate enjoyed a few years with little turnover.

In 1959 Brother Rian initiated the *Juniorate Journal*, a two-page hectographed newsletter published weekly by students in English classes. This

gave the students some experience in journalism and kept the brothers in the province informed about happenings at the juniorate. Later this journal, renamed the *Junior World*, would be professionally published in a four-page format five times a year until its demise on May 30, 1965.

With the division of the province in 1960, seniors from Daphne no longer went to Metuchen to finish high school. Thus, on May 28, 1961, Sacred Heart Juniorate in Daphne graduated its first class of six seniors. Among them was Francis Xavier Werneth, a future provincial. Commencement exercises took place in the chapel at the scholasticate in Spring Hill with Father William James, assistant superintendent, presiding. Diplomas were granted through McGill Institute, a fully accredited high school in Mobile.

Sacred Heart Juniorate continued as a preparatory high school at Daphne for another four years. In the late '50s and early '60s, brothers everywhere seemed well pleased with the formation being given at the juniorate. After his visit in 1960, Brother André Robichaud, provincial, wrote: *"Excellent work is being done at Daphne. B. Lee and his assistants are ideal for their work. B. Lee is one of our top men very capable and very religious. The boys receive an excellent formation. I think B. Lee is our best formation master. We may soon have to build at Daphne to accommodate aspirants."* (Report, December 15, 1960) Among the students at the juniorate during Brother André's visit was Bernard Couvillion, who later led the New Orleans Province as provincial from 1988 until 1994 when he was elected to serve as superior general to the year 2000.

In 1963 Brother Lee completed six years at Daphne. Brother More Schaefer, returning from the second novitiate exercises at St. Anicet in Canada, replaced him as director and postulant master. Brother More brought a different perspective to the formation of young men, placing a strong emphasis on psychological development. A firm believer in professional preparation, he made efforts to enhance the educational program at Daphne. He added class time, improved the quality of instruction, and allowed more time for personal study.

Following the division of the province in 1960, Brother André and his provincial council began looking to build a new juniorate to accommodate larger numbers. For that purpose, the council purchased property in Lacombe, Louisiana; but lack of money prevented building. The council studied other options. One was to find something near Cor Jesu in New Orleans; another was to purchase the old Oblate scholasticate across from St. Stanislaus on Bay St. Louis.

The vocation outlook changed but not as Brother André and others had predicted. Dramatic changes in society negatively impacted religious life. As a strong indication of the decline to come, the numbers entering the juniorate fell off drastically. For the 1963-64 school year, Daphne enrolled only 24 boys in Grades 10-12. Brothers no longer recruited freshmen since provincial chapters asked them to put more emphasis on attracting high school seniors and college students and much less on younger boys. Not only had the number of those entering the juniorate at Daphne dwindled considerably, but the rate of their perseverance also dropped drastically. So, the provincial council by majority vote decided to transfer the juniorate from Daphne to Bay St. Louis in 1965. The council cited the following reasons:

a) *"a) It is most difficult to maintain and perfect a high school program for a small group of boys.*

b) *The large number of boys leaving the juniorate point to major difficulties in the present program.*

c) *St. Stanislaus is our own school, has a good teacher-pupil ratio, has fewer laymen than most of our schools, has good top classes, and has adequate facilities for as many juniors as we may have at any one time."* (Minutes, March 4, 1965)

At the time of the decision, only 15 young men, nine of them seniors, were enrolled at Daphne. In May 1965, Sacred Heart Juniorate graduated its fifth and final class. Ironically, nine seniors made it the school's largest graduating class. During Daphne's 15 years as a juniorate from 1950 to 1965, a total of 236 young men lived, worked, prayed, and studied with the brothers to discern their religious vocation. Fifty-six of them made vows as Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Forty-five of those brothers later left the community. By 1996, only 11 brothers remained from those candidates who entered the Daphne juniorate; but most of the 236 men could recall many happy memories of their days at Daphne and the formation they received there.

Juniorate at Bay St. Louis

Brother More moved with the six remaining juniors to Bay St. Louis before the 1965-66 school session. Nine more postulants joined them, and the 15 juniors attended classes at St. Stanislaus College which offered a full array of courses with proper science labs and a full teaching staff. The candidates lived on the school campus in a new building constructed to accommodate up to 18

juniors. Brother Noel Lemmon lived and worked with them as assistant postulant master.

Not only were the juniors less isolated under the new arrangement, but they also had opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities at St. Stanislaus. Three of them joined the band, and four others took part in interscholastic athletics. Another was elected to the student council. In spite of so many activities, emphasis was still placed on daily Mass, meditation, and spiritual reading. In 1967 the formation team and the provincial evaluated the new program and concluded: *"We should have done this years ago."* (Provincial's Report, January 20, 1967)

The perseverance rate of those entering the juniorate at Bay St. Louis proved no better than that at Daphne, however. Of the nine boys that entered in 1965, all but one left the following year. Four new students entered in 1966 and another four in 1967, but by 1968 three of them had left. For 1967-68 Brother Noel became postulant master with Brother Aquin Gauthier as assistant. They guided the five students that remained at the juniorate. After the provincial chapter decided in July 1968 that the province would accept candidates only after they completed high school, Brother Noel resigned as postulant master. The provincial council then closed the juniorate at Bay St. Louis and offered the five students there the option of continuing as boarders at St. Stanislaus if they wished. The school later converted the juniorate building into a band room for St. Stanislaus.

Provincial Headquarters at Daphne

In 1965 after the juniorate moved to Bay St. Louis, the house at Daphne became provincial headquarters. It housed Brothers Hubert, provincial; Alfred Rodriguez, secretary; Martin Hernandez, treasurer; Felician Fourrier, director of studies; and Jean Sobert, vocation director. As local director, Brother Alfred redecorated the house with antiques. At his request, many friends donated valuable furnishings such as large mirrors for the hallways, a solid walnut umbrella stand, a rosewood etagere, pendulum chime clocks, and an exquisite chandelier of more than 400 prisms of Venetian crystal.

The house at Daphne served as provincial headquarters for only five years. The large house and vast grounds proved impractical with so few brothers there to maintain them. Nor was Daphne centrally or conveniently located within the province. In addition, the provincial council was looking for all possible sources of money after Hurricane Camille severely damaged St. Stanislaus. So, the

council put the Daphne property on the market in November 1969. In spite of the sentimental attachments that brothers had for the former juniorate and in spite of the possibilities that it offered in terms of a retreat house or a summer home, practicality prevailed. In June 1970, the council finalized arrangements to sell the buildings and property at Daphne for $223,000 to Bayside Academy for use as a school. Brother Alfred sold the antiques at an auction, and the provincial headquarters were moved to 204 Hancock Street in Bay St. Louis a few months after Brother Mark Thornton took office as provincial in 1970.

CHAPTER 15

SACRED HEART SCHOLASTICATE

Spring Hill, Alabama

Brother Gilbert Reuter, provincial, proudly presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for the new scholasticate at Spring Hill, Alabama, May 12, 1949. Butler and Cobbs of Montgomery won the construction contract for a low bid of $350,000. William R. Burk of New Orleans designed the red brick three-story building to accommodate up to 75 student brothers plus a teaching staff. The scholasticate sat on top of a knoll which sloped gently to the south before dropping off into a ravine. The five-acre tract of land which the province had bought from Mrs. Inez B. Friend in 1947 for $17,000 provided a beautiful setting for study with its azaleas, dogwoods and towering pines. Its location within easy walking distance of Spring Hill College, a liberal arts college run by the Jesuits, made it ideal for a scholasticate.

Designed for easy maintenance, the building was totally functional, yet attractive. The ground floor included visitors' reception and rest rooms, a director's office, a large library-study room, a recreation room, four classrooms, separate dining rooms for the student brothers and the staff, as well as a large kitchen. In addition, a one-story wing contained storage facilities, showers and toilets, a laundry room, boiler room, workshop, and a garage for a car and bus. The second floor consisted of an infirmary, two small dormitories for postulants, and 10 private rooms with semiprivate baths for the staff. The staff community room, with a view toward Mobile to the south, completed the second floor. Two large dormitories, separated by a large room of toilets, showers, and sinks for the scholastics, made up most of the third floor.

A large chapel, two stories high, adjoined the main building by means of a one-story hallway. The chapel was richly decorated with marble altars, several large stained-glass windows, pews, a bronze tabernacle, hand-painted stations of the cross, and several statues all given as memorial gifts. Brother Martin Hernandez, the very day that he learned of his nomination as provincial in 1949, met with the Mothers' Club of St. Aloysius in New Orleans where he was principal. He boldly asked the ladies to donate a large stained-glass window depicting the arrival of the brothers in Mobile and an organ for the new chapel under construction at Spring Hill. Happily, they responded favorably. Another group of ladies in the Brothers' Mothers Club of New Orleans, led by Mrs. Genevieve Berry, founder and president of the organization for more than 10

years, donated many furnishings for the new scholasticate. Two busloads of ladies from these two clubs attended the dedication as honored guests.

Front view of the Sacred Heart Scholasticate at Spring Hill

On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 16, 1950, Bishop Thomas J. Toolen of Mobile dedicated the new scholasticate. Among the dignitaries present were Brothers Albertinus Juge, superior general, and Bartholomew Barthélemy, provincial of New England. They met with Brother Martin after the ceremony to finalize arrangements for the New England scholastics to join the student brothers at Spring Hill. Thus, Sacred Heart Scholasticate opened in September 1950 with 46 scholastics, 20 of them from New England.

The first staff consisted of Brothers Ignatius Anderson, director and scholastic master; Claver Thomas, faculty member at Spring Hill College; Arthur Lessard of the New England province; Maurice Chatras, a 77-year-old retired French brother who was a past provincial and assistant general; Cyrus Harrington, cook; and Berchmans Downey who stayed only for part of the first semester. "Doc Claver," the first brother in the province to obtain a doctoral degree, was named to advise the scholastics on their courses of studies.

The new scholasticate afforded the student brothers *"greater advantages for preparation in their religious and professional formation a program decided upon by the last Provincial Chapter as a first and necessary step forward in the new century of service for the Sacred Heart."* (*Annuaire* 44:78) In commenting on the new scholasticate, Brother Carl Evans, a scholastic, pointed out the many advantages of its location near Mobile, its proximity to the Jesuits' liberal arts college, and its seclusion which afforded the solitude necessary for prayer, meditation, and study. (*The Province Monthly*, June 1950) The scholasticate

symbolized a dream come true: it offered young brothers the opportunity to begin their teaching careers with a college degree and the necessary certification rather than pursuing degrees over a period of many summers, Saturday classes, and tedious correspondence courses.

For 1951-52 Brother Alexis Klee, who had just accepted a two-year term as president of the National Catholic Educational Association's Secondary School Department, replaced Brother Ignatius as scholastic master. However, Brother Alexis was elected assistant general at the 1952 General Chapter in Rome, and Brother Ignatius returned as scholastic master in October of 1952. At the time, there were 50 scholastics, 12 of them from New England. There were also four postulants at the scholasticate that year. Between 1951 and 1969, more than 90 college-age candidates joined the community at Spring Hill. Thirty-six of them completed the novitiate and made first vows; 10 remain as brothers today.

The scholastics followed an accelerated degree program that included a double major in education and their teaching field, as well as a substantial background in theology and philosophy. To earn the required credits in three years, they carried 18 to 21 hours a semester while most students took only 12 to 15 hours. The scholastics also had to take six to nine hours each summer. They had little time for anything besides study and prayer. The daily program included Mass, meditation, the rosary, morning and evening prayers, and a half hour of spiritual reading. Then too there were daily house chores and regular singing practices. From 5 a.m. rising until 9:30 p.m. lights out, the brothers stayed busy.

Most scholastics found time daily, if not by choice then by necessity, for a short period of sports activities such as softball or basketball. Since these activities substituted for physical education classes, they were required. So, the province saw need to provide adequate recreational facilities. In March 1951, the provincial council borrowed $6,000 from the New England Province to buy the Unruh property across Loyola Lane on the north side of the scholasticate. This property, consisting of 1 acres on the corner of Bishop and Loyola lanes, served as a playing field. An area on the other side of the house was blacktopped for a basketball court.

Everything at the scholasticate favored study, recollection, and withdrawal from anything not directly connected with the formation program. The brothers were told not to stop to speak with other students during the few minutes it took to walk from the scholasticate to the college. In fact, there was almost no contact at all with the students at Spring Hill College. Brothers had no time to participate

in any extracurricular activities and they were not allowed to remain on campus during their free time, except to visit the library. In 1953 when Brother Alexis visited the scholasticate as assistant general, he reported that even though Spring Hill College had become coeducational in 1952, the women, whose number on campus that year was small, *"presented no danger to the vocations of the young brothers."* (1953 Visitation Report, p. 14)

Many students at Spring Hill groaned aloud on the first day of courses when several Jesuits or Brothers of the Sacred Heart in their black suits entered their classrooms. They considered these scholastics as "curve-breakers," setting high standards of study and performance for the rest of the class. Indeed, many of the brothers graduated from Spring Hill *summa cum laude, magna cum laude,* or *cum laude*. More than half of the brothers' professors were Jesuit priests. Most of the classes were on the Spring Hill College campus, but some were conducted at the scholasticate by either brothers or Jesuits.

Semester breaks offered the scholastics opportunity to see an occasional film at the Jesuit House of Studies just next door. Some scholastics also organized weekend excursions to Daphne to enjoy the water activities there and to get away from the books for a while.

In September of the 1957-58 school year, the province had 38 scholastics at Spring Hill. By January there were only 28. Principals in province schools had already hired 57 lay teachers that year, and they pressured Brother Martin, provincial, for more teaching brothers. Whenever one of the 185 teaching brothers in the province fell ill, a scholastic was called upon to replace him. Brother Martin mentioned to the superior general in his report that the Rule referred to sick brothers as *"treasures."* He concluded that the province was very rich in that regard with its 23 incapacitated brothers, 10 elderly and 13 seriously sick and unable to teach. One such treasure was Brother Maurice, who spent the last 17 of his 93 years at Spring Hill where his keen interest in community affairs and his intellectual curiosity positively influenced the young student brothers.

After Brother Ignatius completed his six-year term as director and master in 1958, Brother Claver was appointed local director with Brother Armand Little as scholastic and postulant master. The following year, Brother Armand became both director and scholastic master; Brother Felician Fourrier was named postulant master. By that time the number of the province's scholastics had reached its peak at 39. But Brother André Robichaud, provincial, followed Brother Martin's practice when hard-pressed for teachers and continued to call upon scholastics to fill gaps in the schools' teaching staffs.

After the division of the province in 1960, the scholastics and postulants from the New York Province continued to study at the scholasticate in Spring Hill. In 1960, 18 of the 30 scholastics and nine of the 15 postulants were from the North. Brother Harold (Walter) Bluhm of the New York Province was assigned to Spring Hill in 1961 as postulant master. He had a doctoral degree in education and became a member of the Spring Hill College faculty, teaching several courses to the brothers and postulants at the scholasticate. He also supervised brothers doing student teaching at McGill Institute in Mobile.

When Brother Marcel Riviere became scholastic master and local director at Spring Hill in 1961, there were 21 scholastics and nine postulants for the New Orleans Province. The number of scholastics dropped to 16 and then to 14 in the two following years because Brother André continued to call upon scholastics to replace teachers. It was not until Brother Hubert's term as provincial that the three years of scholasticate training were honored. Then in 1966 the program was increased to four years to allow the scholastics time to participate in campus activities and to undertake, as part of their scholastic formation, apostolic projects such as teaching CCD classes and tutoring exceptional children.

In 1965 Brother Pierre St. Pierre became local director, and Brother Marcel continued as scholastic master. They worked well together, and under their guidance the scholasticate prospered. Brother Pierre enthusiastically sought funds to buy a new bus, enlarge the garage, and air condition the chapel, study halls, offices, and community rooms. He organized a program whereby the scholastics took turns helping to prepare meals so that they could learn a few cooking skills. Brother Marcel remained faithful to regular interviews with the young brothers, giving each of them individual attention and spiritual direction. He led the young brothers in implementing some of the ideas of the Ecumenical Council. An article entitled "Scholasticate Liberalizes in Conservative Fashion" reported on liturgical changes at Spring Hill: English being used in the liturgy, singing accompanied by guitar music, and the altar being turned around so that the celebrant faced the congregation. (*Province Monthly*, September 1965, p. 2)

For the 1966-67 school year, the scholasticate was filled to capacity with 70 residents. The group included 45 scholastics: 23 from New Orleans, 10 from New York, and 12 from New England. In addition, five student brothers, four from Africa and one from New Orleans, lived with the regular community of six brothers which consisted of Brothers Pierre St. Pierre, director; Marcel Riviere, scholastic master; Patrick Reidy of New York who replaced Walter Bluhm as postulant master; Maurice Chatras; Claver Thomas; and Pascal Ackerman, province tailor. There were also eight postulants from New Orleans and six

from New York. Thus, the combined group of 70 justified maintaining such a large facility.

In October of 1967 the provincial council agreed to invest up to $25,000 to convert the two dormitories on the third floor into 40 private rooms for the scholastics. The postulants' quarters on the second floor remained as dormitories at their own request. No one at that time could foresee that the scholasticate was on the verge of being closed.

The large number of scholastics declined rapidly in the late '60s due to the drop in vocations. That drop combined with a change of policy doomed the scholasticate. In July 1968, the New York provincial, Brother Daniel Devitt, informed Brother Hubert, provincial of New Orleans, that most of the scholastics from the North would attend colleges close to home for the 1968-69 school year. That year only one scholastic from New York and two from New England studied at Spring Hill. Of the 18 scholastics from New Orleans, four would finish in December. So, in September 1968, the provincial council began seriously discussing the situation of the small number of brothers at the scholasticate. It projected only 12 scholastics for the first semester of 1969-70 and only five for the second semester. On February 28, 1969, the provincial council unanimously decided to investigate the possibility of selling the scholasticate since the projected number of scholastics was too small for such a large building.

The council was well aware that the time was right to sell. The building had been used for 20 years and was nearing the point of needing costly repairs. Yet it was in good condition, thanks to many hours of work done by the brothers in maintaining it over the years. St. Paul's Episcopal Church in the immediate neighborhood was planning a new school and expressed interest in buying the scholasticate. On March 15, 1969, the council unanimously agreed to sell the scholasticate and property at Dogwood and Loyola lanes. Brother Hubert announced to the brothers, *"An option to buy the scholasticate has been granted to St. Paul's Episcopal Day School for $5,000. Terms of the options are: (a) The selling price is $615,000; $350,000 is the first down payment (the $5,000 given for the option is applied to the down payment) with the balance payable over a period of fifteen years. (b) Included in this option are the land, building, permanent fixtures, organ and major kitchen equipment."* (Circular, May 2, 1969) On September 6, 1969, the province sold the scholasticate to St. Paul's Episcopal Day School for $615,000.

Sacred Heart Scholasticate closed after the 1969 summer session. But the student brothers continued their degree programs at Spring Hill College for the

1969-70 school year. The province rented the former rectory of St. Paul's Episcopal Church near the college to house three student brothers and one postulant all under the guidance of Brother Marcel. Three other scholastics lived with the brothers at nearby Catholic Boys' Home, and another one at the provincial residence in Daphne. In 1970 the postulants and student brothers moved to a newly established house of studies in New Orleans. But Brother Claver, a stalwart at Spring Hill College for nearly a quarter of a century, continued to teach there. In 1981 Spring Hill honored him as a model of excellence in education and established The Brother Claver Thomas Award to be given annually to the outstanding graduate in education. Whenever brothers speak of their scholastic training at Spring Hill, they recall with affection "Doc Claver" who inspired them.

CHAPTER 16

ST JOHN-RESURRECTION

Montgomery, Alabama

The origin of the brothers' mission in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1986 differed from most others. The brothers began working in most locations in response to an invitation from a bishop or pastor. The brothers' apostolate in Montgomery, however, resulted from their own initiative in seeking a home mission project to involve brothers in working with the poor. (Chapter 9 covers the province's discernment process under the topic "Mission in Montgomery.") Once the provincial council decided to assume the administration of St. John the Baptist School in Montgomery, it named Brother Ronald Talbot principal and director of the project. All brothers interested in the home mission project were invited to attend a specially designed two-week summer workshop sponsored by the Josephites at their Pastoral Center in Washington, DC. Seven brothers along with the provincial, Brother Xavier Werneth, and the newly appointed pastor at St. John's, Father Robert Zawacki, SSJ, participated in the workshop. Ten experts addressed the group about working in the black community in general and Montgomery in particular.

Centrally located in close proximity to the downtown area near the state capitol, St. John the Baptist School on South Union Street was in a totally black neighborhood. Its students came from low-to middle-income families. The parish had been founded in 1908 by a Josephite priest, the Rev. Daniel Rice. In 1915 Mother Katherine Drexel, superior of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, had started the school and paid three lay teachers and a principal to take care of 105 elementary students in four classrooms above the church. Two years later, the Blessed Sacrament Sisters arrived to manage the school. For 70 years it flourished under their guidance. It included a high school section from 1933 until 1947 when St. Jude High School opened for black students in Montgomery.

In 1961 St. John's constructed a new building to accommodate an enrollment of 262 students in the elementary school. This enrollment remained steady until the sisters withdrew in June 1985 due to lack of personnel. Their withdrawal left a vacuum in the school. But seven dedicated lay teachers under the leadership of Mrs. Eula Flowers, the sixth-grade teacher who filled in as principal, were determined to keep the school opened. None of them were Catholic; but as good Christians, they not only taught the children religious values but traditional Catholic prayers as well. With the unplanned departure of

the sisters, a final decision to keep the school open was not announced until July 1985. This delay, plus the fact that tuition had to be increased from $500 to $800, caused the enrollment to drop to only 130 students. The next year, the brothers joined the seven lay teachers, giving the school stability and a sense of new hope.

Front view of St. John the Baptist Religion Education Center and Church showing the brothers' residence on the second floor of the Center

Negotiations with Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb of Mobile and Ms. Gwen Byrd, superintendent of schools for the archdiocese, went smoothly. So did those with the Rev. John Fillipellini, superior general of the Josephites, whose congregation conducted St. John the Baptist Parish. The province agreed to provide an administrator and two brothers to work at the school for the regular archdiocesan stipend for religious. The diocese provided the brothers with the top floor of the former sisters' convent that had become a Religious Education Center. It was a large two-story building next to the Church on South Union Street. After the archbishop, the superintendent, and the provincial toured the site with Brother Ronald to agree on what was needed, the diocese completely furnished and prepared the living quarters in anticipation of the arrival of the brothers. The brothers assigned to Montgomery agreed to donate any surplus from their living expenses at the end of each school year to help needy students.

From the outset, it was clear to all involved that the brothers' commitment in Montgomery was intended to be short-term and would be evaluated at the end of three years. *"The brothers will go to Montgomery,"* Brother Xavier, provincial, wrote to the brothers *"as true missionaries to work with the people there to stabilize the situation, to help get the enrollment back up, to assist in putting the school on a better financial footing, and to bring the good news of salvation to the young students, to assure them that God does indeed love them . . . . It is most fitting that the Spirit is calling us to the Archdiocese of Mobile where in 1847 our missionaries from France began their work of education in the United States among the poor orphans."* (Circular December 11, 1985)

For Archbishop Lipscomb the brothers' decision was *"not only an answer to a prayer but a new miracle."* He very much wanted the archdiocese to maintain an evangelizing presence in this inner-city school where only 17 students were Catholic. In his column in *The Catholic Week* of February 28, 1986, which he entitled "I Believe in Miracles," he wrote: *"As one who received the four years of his high school education from the Brothers of the Sacred Heart at McGill in Mobile, I can attest to the remarkable gift that comes to the family of faith in Montgomery through these religious men. They will have our prayers and cooperation in every way for a bright future at St. John's filled with blessings and every success."*

In August 1986, Brother Ronald assumed the administration of St. John the Baptist Elementary School with an enrollment of 127 students in grades one to eight. Joining him that first year were Brothers Brian Weber and James Burns, both certified elementary school teachers. Besides handling his administrative duties, Brother Ronald taught eighth-grade math and fourth-grade religion. And to help accomplish some of the province's goals, he served as executive secretary for the parish school board and helped the Parent-Teacher Association with fund-raising. Brother James taught junior-high religion, cochaired the religion department with Brother Brian, and coordinated the school's liturgy programs. Brother Brian taught the second grade and chaired the reading department. The three brothers joined with the pastor and Sister Francetta Brown, a Sister of Providence, to lead the faculty in developing the religious atmosphere of the school.

The faculty, parents, and students at St. John warmly welcomed the brothers. The brothers found the students not only very polite and docile, but generally self-disciplined. Parents wanted their children to do well in school and monitored their progress. Most students possessed good attitudes toward study, even though learning conditions sometimes left much to be desired. Few students had a private study area at home, nor did many have access to reading

materials in their homes. At school, the instructional program took place in self-contained classrooms for the lower grades.

The higher grades were departmentalized.All teachers emphasized basic skills. In addition to the student council, extracurricular activities at St. John's included basketball, cheerleading, and scouts.

In 1987-88 Brother Ronald added a kindergarten class as a means to boost enrollment and to help the many working mothers who had children in school. Under Brother Ronald's capable administration, the enrollment climbed to 182. Brother Ronald also obtained a subsidy from the archdiocese in order to increase teacher salaries which were substandard.

Brother Brian Weber conducting class at St. John the Baptist in March 1987

During the 1988-89 school year, the province evaluated whether to extend its commitment beyond the initial three years. The provincial, Brother Bernard Couvillion, consulted with appropriate groups involved in the school. In addition, a special evaluation committee consulted with all the brothers in the province by means of a questionnaire. Based on the various consultations, the provincial council decided to extend the province's commitment in Montgomery another three years. Brother Bernard then met privately with the archbishop and with the superior general of the Josephites to share results of the brothers' evaluation and to discuss certain improvements. The living arrangements for the brothers proved inconvenient in that they had to pass through the office area on the bottom floor of the Religious Education Center to get to their living quarters. Also brothers shared a kitchen with the office staff. The brothers lived very

simply, doing all of their own cooking and house cleaning without complaining, but it was difficult for them to feel totally at home in such a situation. At the request of the provincial, the archdiocese turned over the entire house to the brothers for their use, and the problem was solved.

The Rev. Eugene McManus, Josephite superior general, named Father Francis Butler, SSJ, a pastor with some parish school experience, to replace Father Robert Zawacki, effective September 1, 1989. In his letter of appointment to Father Butler, the superior general wrote: *"The Brothers at St. John's School have exhibited special care and concern during their presence the last three years. They are at the school because they have made a preferential option for the poor. I believe you will find in them a very special zeal for evangelization and the education of children."* (Provincial's Newsletter, August 24, 1989)

Brother Ronald Hingle replaced Brother Ronald Talbot as principal for the school year 1989-90, and Brother Brian was named local director. Brother Farrel Lorio, an ordained brother, replaced Brother Denis Blais of New England who had served on the faculty since 1987. Regarding his new assignment to Montgomery, Brother Farrel wrote his friends in a 1989 Christmas circular, *"I fell in love with the youngsters, with the size of the school, with the entire situation. It brought back happy memories of the twelve years long ago when I taught God's little people in Vicksburg."* Brother Farrel taught religion to the third and fourth grades. The same three brothers remained in 1990-91, their last year at St. John the Baptist School.

Difficulties developed between the brothers and the pastor, Father Butler, regarding restrictions he placed on using the church for school functions and his preference that a traditional catechism be used in preparing children for first communion. These misunderstandings, as well as financial and enrollment realities, led Brother Ronald Hingle to discuss with the Rev. Manuel Williams, CR, pastor of Resurrection Parish, the possibility of merging St. John the Baptist School with Resurrection School, an elementary school founded in 1943 by the Sisters of Nazareth to serve the black community. In the spring of 1991, Brother Ronald and the principal of Resurrection met with representatives of the Josephite Fathers and the Community of the Resurrection. Members of St. Jude Educational Institute and officials of the Archdiocese of Mobile joined the discussions. The group unanimously supported merging the two schools effective for the 1991-92 school year in order to meet the students' needs better and to continue to serve the African-American population in Montgomery.

Following another thorough three-year evaluation of the brothers' presence in Montgomery, the province committed itself in 1991 to three more

years. The brothers moved from the large residence on Union Street provided by St. John's Parish to a smaller rental home on Lynnhurst Lane. The move put them closer to the consolidated school.

Brother Ronald Hingle was named principal of St. John-Resurrection Catholic Elementary School, the new name for the consolidated school. St. John-Resurrection was on Forbes Drive at the site of the former Resurrection Catholic School which had been constructed in 1965. The school facility was beautiful, well-kept, and air-conditioned. Besides classrooms for grades one to eight, it included four classrooms for an early-childhood program, two preschool sections, and two kindergarten rooms. A large multipurpose building served as a gym, auditorium, and a cafeteria which permitted all students to participate in the federal lunch program. Enrollment for 1991-92 was 287, counting 35 in the preschool classes. The larger student body and staff allowed the school to enhance its course offerings by adding computer-literacy, music, and physical education to the curriculum.

The newly consolidated school functioned as part of the larger Resurrection Catholic Mission Center which enjoyed the presence of six religious congregations besides the Brothers of the Sacred Heart: the Resurrection Fathers and Brothers, Sisters for Christian Community, Sisters of St. Joseph, the Josephite Fathers, the Sisters of Providence, and the Oblate Sisters of Providence who supplied several teachers for the school. Each week the brothers participated in a Eucharist and a meal with the school leadership team which included the pastor and two sisters the religious education coordinator and school librarian. The merger of the two schools enabled the brothers to engage in a wider evangelization effort which attracted brothers and their students from other schools in the province for special holiday and summertime projects.

In February 1993, Brother Ronald Hingle, who had served as principal for one year at St. John the Baptist and two years at St. John-Resurrection, was appointed province vocation director effective in July. Brother Bernard, provincial, wrote the brothers: *"After consultation begun by the provincial council last January, we reached the conclusion that we are unable to provide a brother as principal of St. John-Resurrection for 1993-94. I met with Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb and Rev. Manuel Williams, CR, president of Resurrection Mission, and with its board of directors to tell them we will continue to supply 3 brothers to the school, but none of them would serve as principal."* (Newsletter, Feb. 2, 1993)

Thus, the brothers had to give up administration of St. John-Resurrection. Three brothers were assigned there for 1993-94. Brother Brian remained for an eighth consecutive year; he was replaced as local director by Brother Dwight

Kenney. Brother Chris Sweeney, on his first full-time teaching assignment, joined them. It proved to be a difficult year for the brothers and the school community. The year got off to a bad start because Sister Inez Theresa, OSP, who replaced Brother Ronald Hingle as principal, found the task too much for her. She was replaced after only three weeks by Sister Francetta Brown, SP, who at 75 years old agreed to serve as interim principal in spite of her advanced age.

In a newsletter to the brothers on January 10, 1994, Brother Bernard announced the council's decision to withdraw the brothers from Montgomery at the end of the 1993-94 school year. He explained: *"Since we sent the brothers to Montgomery in 1986 our manpower picture has changed significantly; in those eight years our province has lost 21 men through attrition. A number of brothers pointed out in their consultation remarks that recent chapters, while continuing to give priority to serving the materially poor, have redirected those efforts toward third-world missionary work, twinning of our schools with needy institutions, and toward summertime social justice experiences."*

In early January, Brother Bernard had explained the province's personnel situation to Father Manuel Williams, pastor of Resurrection. In a letter to him, he added: *"Our presence in Montgomery, particularly at St. John-Resurrection, has been a grace for the eight brothers who have served over eight years' time. We have benefitted from the gifts of dedication, faith, cultural exchange, and affirmation from the faculty, students, and parents of St. John-Resurrection. More personally, we have deeply appreciated your support and that of the school board and superintendent. You have given us every sustenance and encouragement. We give thanks to God for the welcome you have given to us."* (Letter, Jan. 3, 1994)

In February an unpleasant incident added to the difficulties that the brothers experienced their final year in Montgomery. One unfortunate consequence of the merger of the two schools had been that some parents of students at the larger consolidated school did not know the brothers as well as did those at St. John the Baptist. Some parents were even suspicious of the brothers' motives and presence in the black community. Brother Chris, the youngest brother on the staff, became the focus of unfair criticism. Full of enthusiasm and energy, he designed a physical education program for the entire school and worked to implement it not only by teaching classes but by raising money to purchase equipment worth several thousand dollars. Some parents accused him of misusing the money. Brother Chris resigned from St. John-Resurrection on February 7, 1994, following what Father Williams, pastor and director of the center, described as *"a series of unrelenting, unwarranted, and*

malicious attacks upon his integrity and character orchestrated by a group of parents in this school community." Father praised Brother Chris for working *"unceasingly and unselfishly."* (Pastor's Letter to the Parents, Feb. 7, 1994)

Brothers Dwight and Brian finished out the 1993-94 school year, the last for the brothers at St. John-Resurrection. Father Williams announced the brothers' departure to the school community in May: *"I am saddened to inform you that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart will not return to SJR for the 1994-95 school year. We are indebted to the Brothers who have made a tremendous contribution to the Montgomery community. I daresay that SJR would not be here had the brothers not come to Montgomery."* (Letter, May 12, 1994) He was able to secure the services of four young sisters from Nigeria as well as two Oblate Sisters of Providence to replace the brothers for the 1994-95 school year.

CHAPTER 17

ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE

New Orleans, Louisiana

Four Brothers of the Sacred Heart opened St. Aloysius College in New Orleans on September 26, 1869, in response to an invitation from Archbishop Jean-Marie Odin. The school was located in a brick building in the French Quarter at Chartres and Barracks streets where LeRichelieu Hotel now stands. The brothers purchased the building from the bishop over a four-year period. Through the untiring efforts of Brother Stanislaus Keating, first director of the school, it grew from a student body of six to 66 its first year. By the second year, a fifth brother joined the staff which worked with the 120 boys, most of them sons of poor immigrants.

Under the leadership of Brother Justin Roche, called *"le Père Justin"* in the Vieux Carré, St. Aloysius prospered. In 1892 he had a faculty of 10 brothers. Since the school was too small for the expanding enrollment, the province purchased a complex of school buildings from the Ursuline Sisters on the corner of Esplanade Avenue and North Rampart Street. After necessary repairs, the brick school, together with another brick building and two frame buildings, served the brothers well. Very capable administrators such as Brothers Charles Roach, Cyprian Sanhet, and Alphonse Journy led St. Aloysius and assured the school's prosperity even during the difficult times of the yellow fever epidemic of 1905 and the great hurricane of September 29, 1915, that wreaked havoc in New Orleans.

In 1922 Brother Albert Dumas completed a six-year term as principal at St. Aloysius; he was succeeded by Brother Paul Couffort, another fine administrator. The brothers had purchased almost the entire block of property at Rampart and Esplanade by that time and had decided to build a new school. In 1924, when the city widened Rampart Street, it expropriated part of the St. Aloysius property, and the old school building had to be demolished. In 1925 a magnificent brick school building was completed at 1137 Esplanade Avenue. The new building enhanced the reputation of St. Aloysius, and its popularity soared. By the end of Brother Paul's term in 1928, the faculty consisted of about 20 brothers, and the school served 500 families, making it one of the largest Catholic schools for boys in New Orleans. Increased enrollment overtaxed the new facility so much that the lower grammar grades had to be discontinued. By

1930 when Brother Lambert Fairfield succeeded Brother William Sharkey as principal enrollment in Grades 7-12 had reached 800.

View of St. Aloysius College built in 1925 at Rampart Street and Esplanade Avenue and utilized until 1969 when the school merged with Cor Jesu

When Brother Lambert became provincial in 1931, Brother Martinian Pauc succeeded him as director-principal at St. Aloysius. In 1934 because of the large number of brothers at St. Aloysius, the roles of religious director and principal were separated. Brother Martinian continued to direct the local community of 26 brothers and to serve as president of the school. Brother Martin Hernandez, age 30, was named principal. In 1937 Brother Martinian became provincial, and Brother Lambert returned as director. Since canon law did not limit the term of principal as it did for religious superiors, Brother Martin continued as principal. Under his capable and vigorous leadership, the school flourished and enrollment peaked at 980 boys. During his administration, Brother Martin constructed a gym in 1937 and a three-story building in 1942 that housed a cafeteria on the bottom floor, four classrooms on the second floor, and 16 private rooms for the brothers on the third floor. He moved the administration building to the corner of Esplanade and St. Claude and enlarged it to include five private rooms as well as the provincial's headquarters.

In 1943 Brother Martin was named director, but he continued as principal of the school as well until 1949 when he became provincial. During his unprecedented 15 years as principal, six of them as director, St. Aloysius's reputation in New Orleans reached new heights. The school continued its excellence in academics and expanded and strengthened its athletic program. St. Aloysius won the state basketball title in 1941, its first of several state basketball titles. The school was riding a crest, but the brothers were well aware that the neighborhood around them was changing. For that reason, the province

invested $104,000 between 1945 and 1947 in the gradual purchase of more than seven acres of property, primarily from the Farley family, in the growing residential area of Gentilly. The council hoped to build a large modern school there. In the meantime public service buses brought nearly 1,000 students from all over the city to the busy double boulevard intersection of Rampart and Esplanade to attend the largest Catholic boys' school in the city. In its cramped space without room to grow, St. Aloysius College continued to work miracles and graduated an average of 200 seniors each year.

Brother André Robichaud replaced Brother Martin as principal in 1949, but in 1951 he was called upon to serve as province vocation director. Brother Augustine Raftery served as principal two years and then Brother Gerard Gilbert one year; Brother Bernard Tunney was local director. Then Brother André returned in 1954 for a four-year term as director-principal. Enrollment had slipped to 830 because there was some disunity among the 30 brothers. Some brothers felt that athletics were overemphasized to the detriment of the academic program. Brother André was very popular with both the brothers and the students, and it was not long before all were united again. By 1957 enrollment had climbed back to 925 with five sections in each high school grade and two classes each in the seventh and eighth grades.

By 1957 six laymen worked with the brothers to teach 24 classes of about 40 students each. One of the lay teachers, Mr. Joseph Taverna, known as "Prof Taverna," built up the school's music department. Under his direction, the St. Aloysius concert band brought many honors to the school. Other laymen among the first to work with the brothers in New Orleans include Coaches Buford Jones, Johnny Altabello, Harry Glover, and Jack Schommer.

Parents of students at St. Aloysius always had a hand in the development of the school. The Mothers' Club, for example, contributed generously to the development of many school programs. Besides financially assisting the band, the library, and the athletic department, the Mothers' Club effected many improvements in the brothers' residence and chapel.

In 1958 St. Aloysius College provided the province with another provincial in the person of Brother André. Three of the four previous provincials had served also as director-principal of St. Aloysius immediately before being named provincial. Brother Martin, outgoing provincial, replaced Brother André for one year. Then from 1959 to 1965, Brothers Mark Thornton, Felician Fourrier, and Lee Barker each served two years as director-principal. Each brought special gifts to the role, and in spite of the frequent changes in administration, the school continued to grow. As the province's largest school,

St. Aloysius proved to be a good source of vocations. The students loved the brothers and the school's reputation remained at the top in the city. In 1960 Brother Mark had to turn away 400 boys for lack of space in the overcrowded buildings.

In 1965 Brother Remigius David was named president-director of St. Aloysius and Brother Lee remained as principal. During Brother Lee's principalship from 1963-66, two portable classrooms were bought for $10,000 to accommodate the lower grades that had been using facilities at nearby St. Augustine's Parish. The number of lay teachers increased to nine. Brother Lee invited them to eat lunch in the brothers' dining room, but this practice upset some of the older men in the house. Having lay people join the brothers for meals was uncommon before Vatican II. In any case, morale among the brothers and lay teachers remained very good and a true family spirit developed.

During Brother Remigius's years as director from 1965-69, the local community of brothers at St. Aloysius began to experience the full impact of changes in religious life. Charity reigned in the house even though some of the older men blocked certain changes. For example, in a report to the superior general, Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, wrote: *"I was present when Brother Remigius attempted to discuss with the community changes in the chapel dictated by the new liturgy and encouraged by the chaplain. The young and middle-aged said nothing after a few vehement and emotional opinions were expressed by a couple of the old men."* (Visitation Report, Jan. 1967)

Brother Flavian Udinsky replaced Brother Lee as principal in 1966. Brother Flavian was a member of the province's Central Committee on Studies and he had recently completed a program at Fordham University on innovation in education. He expanded the curriculum and introduced many innovations at St. Aloysius in the late '60s. Among them were the use of letter grades to replace number grades, the use of computers and television as instructional tools, a phased elective English curriculum, and a new schedule featuring unstructured periods for students. In 1967 St. Aloysius became the first school in the South to incorporate the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps into its program. Brother Remigius, director-president, was awarded the Certificate of Activation during ceremonies aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Lexington* in the port of New Orleans. In January 1969, the St. Aloysius NJROTC drill team marched in the inaugural parade of President Richard Nixon.

In 1967 the St. Aloysius Parent-Teacher Association was formed. Uppermost in parents' minds was the future of St. Aloysius. They knew that the

provincial council, the school administration, and all the brothers in the province were studying various options for addressing the problems of overcrowding, outmoded physical facilities, and the increasingly deteriorating neighborhood around St. Aloysius College. Parents had heard unsettling rumors about the possibility of St. Aloysius moving to Harahan. The provincial council had in fact accepted a contract with the Archdiocese of New Orleans to administer a new school in Harahan which would replace the old St. Aloysius.

The proposed school on a 17-acre tract of land in Harahan was to open for classes in September of 1968. The brothers were to be in control of planning and building the school which would share certain facilities such as a library, cafeteria, and auditorium, with a girls' school to be constructed on an adjacent 14-acre piece of property. The archdiocese agreed to buy the old St. Aloysius school and property from the brothers at the appraised price. The brothers and the archdiocese were to share equally the construction costs of the new school. Furthermore, the province agreed to commit three brothers if the archdiocese converted the old St. Aloysius into a vocational, technical, or trade school for high school boys.

In a letter to the brothers, Brother Hubert, provincial, informed them that *"the agreement between the Archdiocese and ourselves with respect to the construction of a new high school on the piece of property in Harahan has been signed and approved by Rome."* (Circular, Sept. 2, 1966) In his letter, he also referred to the fact that the overwhelming majority of brothers agreed with the decision, but there were a few who did not. He urged brothers to continue discussing among themselves in a calm manner not with vehemence or infallibility. The council asked Brother Martin to supervise the construction of the new school and named a committee of brothers to work with the architects. The future of St. Aloysius College seemed settled.

But the new school never materialized. The plans had become public prematurely, without the necessary public relations work. Many parents who did not favor the change decided to enroll their sons elsewhere. As a result, registration for the freshman class entering St. Aloysius in September 1967 was 160 fewer than the previous year. In addition, the archdiocese, struggling with a money shortage, postponed indefinitely construction of the new St. Aloysius, badly exacerbating the situation.

Brother Hubert wrote to Archbishop Philip Hannan: *"Because of the difficulty in keeping such an agreement confidential and the consequent deleterious effect on the registration at St. Aloysius together with the repercussions suffered by the Archdiocese itself from the people in the area*

because of unavoidable indefiniteness of the opening of the proposed St. Aloysius, the Council authorized the abrogation of the agreement. This was done with the sole purpose of making things easier on both the Archdiocese and St. Aloysius High School." (Letter, February 20, 1967) In his letter, Brother Hubert offered the archbishop whatever assistance he deemed feasible in the construction of the new school. He also expressed gratitude for the $30,000 which the archdiocese offered to help renovate the brothers' residence at St. Aloysius.

The provincial council studied the problem anew. It looked as though there would be no hope of a new school any time in the near future. The council decided that first consideration should be given to the St. Aloysius brothers' residence which was in deplorable shape. It approved up to $300,000 for the construction of a new residence. The minutes state the council's reasoning: *"Since there is still some possibility of moving to a new location, Brother Provincial and Brothers Remigius and Flavian of St. Aloysius consulted with the board of lay advisors of St. Aloysius. They all agreed to the need of improvement and they agreed wholeheartedly that the first step should be a new residence for the Brothers."* (Council Minutes, May 9, 1967)

On July 23, 1967, the provincial council held a special meeting in New Orleans to discuss the future of St. Aloysius. At that time the council consisted of Brothers Roland Smith, director at St. Stanislaus; Marcel Riviere, scholastic master; Lee Barker, principal at St. Stanislaus; and Gaspar Rodrigue, principal at Cor Jesu. The council invited the following brothers to this special meeting at Cor Jesu: Brothers Remigius, president-director of St. Aloysius; Flavian, principal of St. Aloysius; Felician Fourrier, director of studies for the province; Philip Lewis, member of the building committee at St. Stanislaus; Martin Hernandez, provincial treasurer; and Brice Hendrick, member of the New Orleans archdiocesan liaison committee for religious and priests.

The members clearly favored consolidating St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu as a solution to the problems facing St. Aloysius. Brother Hubert asked that the members take this information back to their local communities for further discussion. The council assigned Brother Remigius to conduct a feasibility study of expanding the Cor Jesu High School facilities to accommodate 1,300 students. Another special council meeting took place in August with the same group plus Brother Lionel Hearld, director of Cor Jesu. After reviewing the results of the study and listening to the reactions from the different houses, the brothers again reached the same consensus consolidate the two schools in New Orleans.

In October 1967, the provincial council submitted the following resolution to the general council for approval:

- *"The Council voted unanimously to amalgamate St. Aloysius with Cor Jesu. To review some of the reasons:*
- *Aloysius is physically on the downgrade;*
- *to build at Aloysius is not desirable or financially possible at this time;*
- *to remain at Aloysius with the present facilities is complicated and becoming more and more difficult;*
- *both Aloysius and Cor Jesu are considered too small to compete in the class of school to which they belong;*
- *the shortage of personnel;*
- *to become better schools, both would need to expand: larger facilities, more students, and added facilities but this is impossible from the point of view of finances and men.*

"However, the Council thinks the province could finance anexpansion of facilities at Cor Jesu designed for modern methods in education to benefit the students of both schools. It also sees the possibility of offering a more enriched curriculum if the schools are combined." (Council Minutes, October 7, 1967)

In January 1968, Brother Hubert wrote a letter to the parents of St. Aloysius students announcing the decision. Thus, the 1968-69 school year at St. Aloysius was special. Not only was it the school's last year at Rampart and Esplanade, but also it marked St. Aloysius's 100th anniversary year. Even though the closing of St. Aloysius saddened many alumni and parents, they determined to celebrate the school's anniversary with a touch of class as a joyful event. Hundreds of brothers, parents, and alumni attended the centennial ceremonies at the Jung Hotel, April 23, 1969. A group of priests, all St. Aloysius alumni, concelebrated a special Mass at which Archbishop Hannan presided. A civic reception and public testimonial followed. Monsignor Henry Bezou, former superintendent of education for the archdiocese and an alumnus of St. Aloysius, addressed the assembly as did Brother Hubert, provincial.

In honor of the 100 years of education that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart had rendered to the people in New Orleans and to preserve the memory of St. Aloysius College, Brothers Remigius, Flavian, and Mark led a group of dedicated laymen to form the St. Aloysius Century Foundation. This corporation, formed in 1969, continues to provide funds for tuition assistance to needy and talented students who otherwise would not be able to afford a Catholic education. Over

the years the foundation has grown to become a major part of the patrimony of Brother Martin High School, heir of St. Aloysius College.

On May 23, 1969, St. Aloysius College conducted its last graduation ceremony. The class of '69 joined the ranks of over 5,000 alumni who graduated from St. Aloysius during its 100-year history. Louisiana Governor John McKeithen presided over the final commencement at the Rivergate Convention Center in downtown New Orleans.

During the period of 1947 through 1969, St. Aloysius enjoyed much success. Its student body succeeded academically with an ever-increasing number of its graduates going to college. Traditionally many of its graduates joined the priesthood or religious life. An issue of the *Aloysian*, the school's All-American newspaper, pointed out in 1955 that more than 100 former St. Aloysius students were then brothers or priests: 53 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, four brothers in other orders, 21 religious priests, and 25 diocesan priests.

St. Aloysius students had a strong sense of school spirit. Their many successes in extracurricular activities, especially in sports, enhanced their pride. During the 22 years from 1947 to 1969, St. Aloysius won two Prep League titles, a city title, a state title, and a national title in baseball. The Crusaders were crowned city champs in football in 1952 and 1955. In basketball, St. Aloysius won seven consecutive city championships and four state championships between 1947 and 1954; then the Crusaders repeated as city champions in 1961, won the district in 1968 and 1969, and were state runners-up in 1969. In September 1969, St. Aloysius students brought their fine tradition and spirit to Brother Martin High School on Elysian Fields Avenue to begin a new chapter in the history of the brothers' schools in New Orleans.

Front view of the brothers' house at St. Aloysius, facing Esplanade Avenue

In July 1969, a fire destroyed the garage and tool shed at the old St. Aloysius campus. All the other buildings rapidly deteriorated and the site was

declared a hazard. Recognizing that the location had become a liability, on July 9, 1970, the provincial council accepted a low bid of $26,500 to demolish all the structures at the site. For several years the province had tried to sell or lease the property, but was hampered by zoning restrictions which severely limited its use. Finally on June 3, 1974, the province sold the property on Rampart and Esplanade to the United States Postal Service for $700,000.

CHAPTER 18

COR JESU HIGH SCHOOL

New Orleans, Louisiana

On September 8, 1954, Cor Jesu High School in New Orleans, a new community-owned school constructed to accommodate 750 boys, opened with Brother Flavian Udinsky as the first principal. Seven brothers were assigned to teach the 216 boys in four freshman classes and the two sophomore classes which had started the previous year at St. Aloysius College. Brother Martin Hernandez, the provincial who planned and watched over Cor Jesu's construction, thought to name the school Archbishop Rummel High School in honor of Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel, who through his Youth Progress Program had made a donation of $475,000 toward its construction and furnishings. But the archbishop humbly refused. Total cost of the new school including furnishings and the seven-acre tract of land bought several years earlier for $104,000 came to $1 million. Annual tuition was $142.50 for 1954-55, and arrangements were made to accept 12 needy students tuition-free.

Newly constructed Cor Jesu High School in a 1954 photo by Frank Miller

The modern school complex, which stretched an entire block on Elysian Fields Avenue between Sumpter and Stephen Girard streets in Gentilly, was the result of many years of prayers, planning, and hard work on the part of the

brothers, their students, and benefactors. The two-storied instructional area contained 16 classrooms, three science laboratories, an art room, and a typing room. A one-story wing housed offices for administrators and guidance personnel, a library, a small auditorium, and a cafeteria with a seating capacity of 300. At the Sumpter Street end of the property, facing Elysian Fields Avenue, was a two-story brothers' residence which contained a chapel for 50 people and 26 small bedrooms with semiprivate baths. The residence, with a garage and custodian quarters in a separate building, was not completed until March 1955. In the meantime, the brothers lived on the second floor of the school. Cor Jesu was dedicated on May 8, 1955, by Archbishop Rummel, and the St. Aloysius concert band played for the ceremonies.

In 1957 Cor Jesu earned accreditation by the State Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Catholic University of America. The class of 1957, its first graduating class, consisted of 48 students, and that of 1958 consisted of 64. Accepting four freshman classes each year, Cor Jesu's enrollment grew rapidly its first few years. By 1958-59 the enrollment reached 451, and five laymen were hired to join the 14 brothers on the staff. Cor Jesu offered a college-preparatory curriculum and placed a strong emphasis on academics. Cor Jesu developed outstanding programs in drama and debating. The school's excellent academic reputation became a liability when it began to project an image of being for the intellectually elite. That image and the lack of an interscholastic sports program severely hampered Cor Jesu's growth. The school had not reached its capacity of 750 students. Yet school spirit was good. The spacious play area behind the school allowed for a well-developed intramural sports program in which every student participated.

Brother Roland Smith, who became principal in 1959, increased the enrollment by lowering admission standards, accepting all who applied. By 1962 Cor Jesu had 19 classes with 710 students and a faculty of 16 brothers and seven laymen. Low morale caused enrollment to drop to 585 in 1964-65. Brother Roland wanted to put in a full interscholastic sports program to attract more boys and to boost morale, but the school lacked money to build a gymnasium. Lack of funds was actually one of the two main reasons that had led Brother Martin, provincial in the '50s, to propose his idea of the *"noble experiment"* of a school without an athletic program in the first place. The other reason, no longer valid, had been the fact that Cor Jesu could not initiate an interscholastic sports program until it added Grades 11-12, making it a complete high school.

In November of 1964, Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, received the good news from Archbishop John Cody of New Orleans that the archdiocese through the United Catholic Educational Fund would contribute $25,000

annually to help with the construction and operation of a gymnasium at Cor Jesu. With such an assurance, Brother Roland proceeded with plans for a gym, and in December 1964, he pronounced an end to the experiment of a school without interscholastic sports. In January 1965, the archbishop confirmed his commitment to the provincial: *"This United Catholic Educational Fund is to be sponsored each year and therefore, my pledge will be binding upon myself and upon my successors in office, as a token of appreciation for the great work that has been done by the Congregation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in providing high school facilities in this Archdiocese."* (Letter, January 29, 1965) He added a note stating, *"It is understood that this financial assistance will be provided each year for a period of ten years or more."*

Aerial view of Cor Jesu High School in 1955 showing the brothers' residence on the far left, the chapel, the classroom wing, the main entrance, the administration complex, and to the rear the auditorium and the cafeteria

In 1965 Brother Gaspar Rodrigue became principal, and Brother Lionel Hearld was named director of the brothers. Brother Gaspar's enthusiasm spread, and school spirit soared. The athletic program had its desired effect. The new multi-purpose gymnasium, the largest in the city, enlivened interest in athletics. The air-conditioned gym was designed to seat 2,500 with folding bleachers and raised banks of seats. It provided a full-sized basketball court with two cross courts for practice, three locker rooms, and two shower rooms. It also included a large stage, an acoustically designed band hall with four practice rooms, and storage areas. A spacious lobby connected the gym to the cafeteria. Twelve hundred fans viewed the Kingsmen's victory in their first interscholastic basketball game, played in their new gym February 18, 1966. In 1967-69 enrollment at Cor Jesu rose to 630, and the number of lay teachers equaled the number of brothers – 15.

Brothers at Cor Jesu became intimately involved in the discussions concerning the merger with St. Aloysius. They expressed strong feelings both for and against. But once the decision was made and announced in October 1967, the brothers began to close ranks and prepare Cor Jesu for the future. Students knew, of course, that 1968-69 would be Cor Jesu's last year. They wanted it to be a memorable one. Perhaps it was that determination which led the Kingsmen of Cor Jesu in 1968 to upset St. Aloysius in football 14-13. In spring sports, Cor Jesu won the state golf title. In May of 1969 Cor Jesu graduated its 13th and final class.

In view of the consolidation with St. Aloysius for the 1969-70 school year, construction of a new classroom wing and administration building began at Cor Jesu in the summer of 1968 and continued throughout the 1968-69 school year. Teachers taught classes over the sounds of pile drivers, motorized wheelbarrows, and power tools. Located behind the existing classroom block, the new two-story building brought the number of classrooms to 36. The new structure also contained five seminar rooms, an art room, and faculty offices on each floor. Folding walls between some classrooms could be opened to accommodate team-teaching of several classes at a time. A highlight of the new construction was the extra-wide carpeted hallways to serve as resource centers. Seventy-two study carrels in these centers would enable students to use free time beneficially. The new administration area included a guidance complex. The old library and auditorium were enlarged, and the cafeteria was converted into a much larger student mall. The school was air-conditioned throughout.

On May 23, 1969, the same date as the final St. Aloysius commencement, Cor Jesu graduated its last class at St. Francis Cabrini Church. Slightly more than 1,300 students finished their high school careers at Cor Jesu during its 15-year history. While its number of graduates is not large, many of them have achieved great success and renown. Among them are Dr. Robert Clark '62, a professor and dean of the Harvard Law School; Judge Tom Porteous '64, a federal district court judge; and Richard Simmons '66, a fitness personality on national television. Brothers Neal Golden '57 and Henry Gaither '62 are alumni who continue to serve as Brothers of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans. Two other Cor Jesu graduates, Messrs. Ron Paulin '58 and Sid Lambert '64 have been chosen Alumni of the Year at Brother Martin High School from among all of the graduates of the brothers' schools in New Orleans.

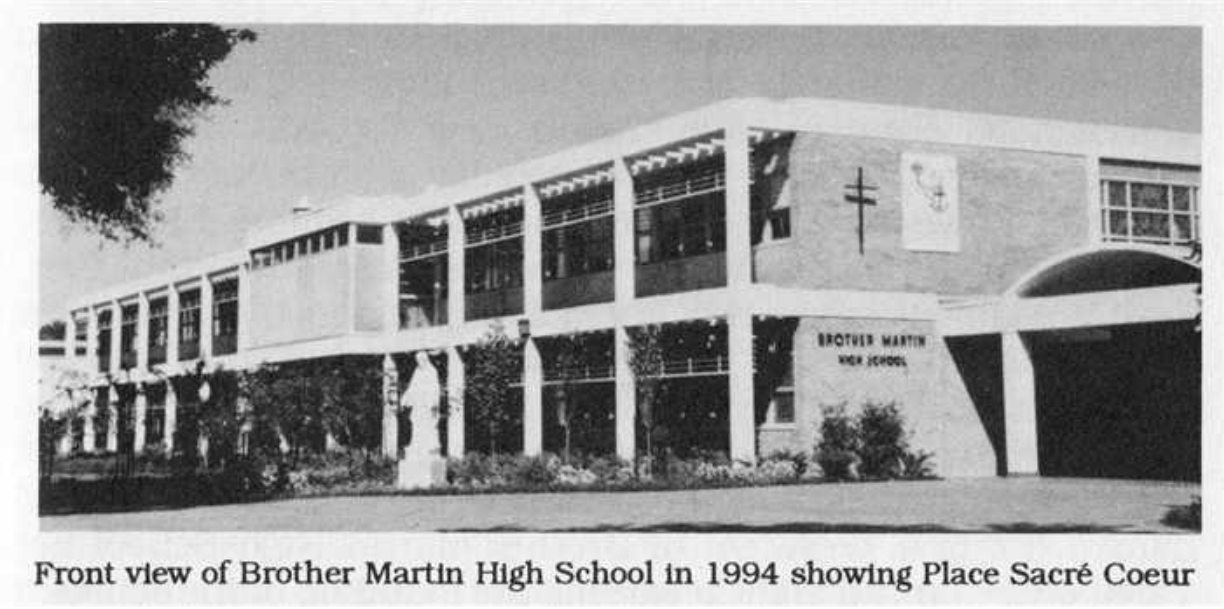
Brother Ivy LeBlanc, president of Brother Martin High School in 1995, stated: *"Perhaps the truest sentiment of a vast majority of Cor Jesu graduates of the value they place on the education they received at Cor Jesu is expressed by sending their sons to Brother Martin High School."*

CHAPTER 19

BROTHER MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL

New Orleans, Louisiana

Brother Martin High School opened in 1969 as a merger of St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu. On July 23, 1967, the provincial council had decided to investigate the idea of consolidating the two schools and appointed Brother Remigius David, director at St. Aloysius, to do a feasibility study. The brothers were consulted on August 29, and they were generally favorable to a merger. Thus, on October 7, 1967, the provincial council unanimously decided to consolidate the two schools at the site of Cor Jesu on Elysian Fields. Rome approved the council's request, submitted on February 28, 1968, for permission to spend $1,250,000 for new and remodeled facilities to accommodate about 1,200 students. On June 12, 1968, the provincial council accepted a low bid of $1,077,400 from Perrilliat-Rickey Construction Co. The St. Aloysius school buildings were to be sold or leased to help pay for the construction costs, but it was not until six years later that the property was finally sold. So the province sold bonds in order to provide money to build and furnish the new school.



Front view of Brother Martin High School in 1994 showing Place Sacré Coeur

The name for the new school generated many a heated discussion among the brothers. Many thought that the 100-year-old name St. Aloysius should be preserved, but others thought that a neutral name should be chosen. On April 12, 1968, Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, published a list of 15 possible names that 158 brothers had suggested. The brothers then voted, but no name

received a majority. The provincial council narrowed the choice to the top four: Brother Martin High School (much to the objection of Brother Martin Hernandez who asked that his name be removed) Brothers of the Sacred Heart High School, Cor Jesu High School, and St. Aloysius High School. After a ballot in May again failed to produce an absolute majority, the council determined that the final decision should be made by the provincial chapter scheduled to convene six weeks later.

According to a chapter report: *"After two days of discussion, the provincial chapter of 1968 decided to name the St. Aloysius-Cor Jesu consolidated school in New Orleans* Brother Martin High School. *It was pointed out that Brother Martin had been closely associated with both schools and served as principal of St. Aloysius for 15 consecutive years and as president for one more year. During his term as provincial, he was responsible for the construction of Cor Jesu; he later served as president there for one year. Currently Brother Martin is handling the financial aspects of the new consolidated school and is overseeing its construction."* (*The Chapter in Progress*, Report #4, July 25, 1968) Brother Martin protested the name of the new school all the way to the archbishop, claiming that Canon Law forbade naming a Church institution after a living person. Archbishop Joseph Rummel, however, disagreed and no doubt reminded Brother Martin that 15 years earlier he himself had suggested that Cor Jesu be named Archbishop Rummel High School.

Assigned to live at Cor Jesu during the 1968-69 school year, Brother Mark Thornton had the difficult job of coordinating the consolidation. Brother Ivy LeBlanc, who was named the first president of Brother Martin High School in 1988, offered this insight regarding the founding of the school: *"Virtually every aspect of religious life and educational philosophy was contested between the* Aloysius brothers *and the* Cor Jesu brothers. *It was this intense rivalry which is interpreted by many as the reason that Cor Jesu resisted any form of educational innovation. With so much innovation taking place at St. Aloysius in the late sixties, Cor Jesu resisted any movement which may have been interpreted as a swing in the Aloysius direction. It is an irony that should not be lost that Cor Jesu, a new school which began with a very innovative* noble experiment *should end up a very tradition bound institution resistant to innovation, and St. Aloysius, a 100-year-old institution which valued its traditions above all else, should end its existence as an educational innovator."* (Notes, April 1995)

Just as brothers throughout the province got involved in naming the new school, so too they got involved in planning its design, meeting on Sundays in New Orleans with Mr. George Saunders, architect. Each week brothers discussed a special topic, bringing together teachers from throughout the province to help

design parts of the school such as the science labs and the library. On behalf of the province's Central Committee on Studies, Brother Flavian Udinksy contacted the school planning lab at Stanford University in California for suggestions on modern designs. Then Brothers Mark, Martin, Remigius, and Flavian traveled coast to coast with Mr. Saunders to examine newly constructed schools. In California, they discovered the concept of a school under one roof at Costa Mesa High School; and in Florida, at Nova High School in Melbourne, they found a design for a resource center to make unstructured periods a more viable educational innovation. Throughout the planning and traveling, brothers made efforts to incorporate modern aspects of school design that would enhance their traditional approaches to education.

Brother Martin High School opened in August of 1969 with an enrollment of 1,250 boys in Grades 8-12, making it the largest Catholic high school for boys in New Orleans. The enrollment, much larger than anticipated, had caused Brother Mark Thornton, principal, to scramble to purchase portable classrooms not an easy job since Hurricane Camille had done tremendous damage along the Gulf Coast on August 17 and hundreds of schools were seeking temporary classroom buildings. Thus began the monumental task of putting together two student bodies, two faculties, and two educational programs to forge a new identity all at a time when traditional institutions in society were under challenge. Although the year had gotten off to an orderly start, students soon became disgruntled. Most upperclassmen had been at St. Aloysius or Cor Jesu the previous year. Virtually every decision, especially those concerning senior rings, diplomas, school uniforms, and the fight song, alienated former students from one of the two schools. Brother Mark was elected to the general chapter and left for Rome in October, but the situation got so tense that he was called back to New Orleans before the chapter concluded.

Truly a peacemaker, Brother Mark saved the school from sinking. Problems among the students were only reflections of far deeper problems dividing the 80 or so faculty members, 42 of them brothers, most of whom had taught at Cor Jesu or Aloysius the previous year. Major issues touched upon methods of teaching religion, the presence of the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps in the curriculum, redesigning the curriculum to incorporate topics of peace and justice, sensitivity to a significant African-American enrollment, procedures of discipline, and the need for the school administration to develop a new style of relating to the brothers who no longer were living in a single residence attached to the school. Brother Mark's collegial leadership style lent itself to a decentralized organizational structure. This approach empowered the faculty to solve problems and united members of the various departments as

they began to grapple with the new realities. In just one year, Brother Mark, with his quiet and personal approach to school management, put his stamp on Brother Martin High School and set a standard of respect emulated by the school's leaders ever since.

When Brother Mark was named provincial, Brother Brice Hendrick became principal for 1970-71, the school's second year. He continued Brother Mark's style of collaborative leadership and made significant progress in unifying the faculty, students, and parents into one school community. The retirement fund that he established for the lay teachers, a local plan that was the forerunner of a province-wide plan initiated in 1981, did much to boost faculty morale.

Student success was very high in academics and athletics during Brother Brice's five years as principal. In 1971 Brother Martin High School produced nine National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. Athletic teams consistently won city, district, and state championships. Probably athletic success, especially the state championship in football in December of 1971, unified the student body more than anything else. The Crusaders also won the state basketball title both in 1970 and 1971. Administrators built on the school spirit resulting from these three state championships in quick succession to unify the students. By the 1973-74 school year, all the former students of St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu had graduated, leaving the students at Brother Martin High School freer to develop their distinct identity and school spirit.

Brother Brice was also very effective in unifying parental involvement and support for the school. The Parents' Club followed in the long tradition of the very active and important Mothers' clubs at St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu. Brother Nicholas Geisenberg, widely respected as an outstanding math teacher for several generations, was put in charge of the Parents' Club from its very beginning. Twenty-five years later, he continued in that role even though he was over 80 years old and retired from teaching. Over the years, Brother Nicholas remained a constant source of stability and commitment, rarely missing a meeting or event, especially a bingo game. The weekly bingo games begun during Brother Brice's administration not only brought the parents together but also formed the basis for scholarship funding that over a 20-year period generated close to $2 million.

Two significant movements at Brother Martin High School in the early '70s captured attention. The first related to the administration's taking seriously a 1968 Provincial Chapter resolution based on the Catholic bishops' civil rights plea: *"It is vital that we must act now and act decisively."* School administrators deliberately decided to take a lead in fostering harmonious racial relationships

and actively recruiting minority students. Brother Martin High School became a leader among the New Orleans Catholic schools in accepting African-American students. During the early '70s, minority enrollment increased to about 13 percent, and the school exceeded the combined African-American enrollment of all other Catholic high schools in the city with the exception of St. Augustine, traditionally an all-black school.

The second major movement of the early '70s involved the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps. Mandatory participation in this program, a source of constant tension and disagreement, brought all of the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War and peace protests right into the school. Brothers, parents, faculty, and students were all directly involved and divided. Some saw the military as a source of much-needed traditional discipline and order at a time when society was undergoing rapid changes. Others saw the mandatory program as putting too much emphasis on the military and detracting from the school's efforts of incorporating peace and social justice units into the curriculum. The fact that religion courses alternated with the NJROTC program in the schedule did not help the situation. Additionally, former Cor Jesu students resented the program as an Aloysius intrusion. Having never worn any type of uniform at Cor Jesu, they did not appreciate having to wear a khaki uniform, especially since St. Aloysius students had worn khaki. Even the United States Navy was dissatisfied since no other school in the country had a mandatory program. After much heated and painful discussion, the school administration made NJROTC optional in 1975, but kept the khaki uniform for all students.

Brother Donnan Berry brought his highly developed organizational skills to the school as principal. While retaining the collaborative and collegial model that had been so effective in unifying the faculty, he began to reorganize the school more in line with a traditional Brothers of the Sacred Heart pattern of leadership. He assured that department chairpersons clarified expectations regarding instruction and that teachers followed the course outlines for the curriculum which became more standardized. He implemented a system of operating procedures throughout the school and strengthened the school's infrastructures in the various departments, especially in finances, maintenance, and support services. The overall effect of Brother Donnan's strong and effective leadership was that the school began to develop a character and identity of its own.

As decision-making processes became clearer, the administration no longer reversed decisions based on reactions of individual departments or groups of departments. Necessary input and consultation were done before decisions were made. In 1976 Brother Donnan established the first board of directors for

Brother Martin High School. Its primary responsibility was the financial operation of the school budgeting, tuition reductions, grants-in-aid to needy students, and all extra-budgetary expenditures. The provincial council appointed seven brothers working in the school to its first board.

During the 1977-78 school year, the National Association of Secondary School Principals honored Brother Donnan as an outstanding principal in the southeastern United States. At the time, he served on the executive committee of the National Catholic Educational Association. Among the many noteworthy accomplishments of Brother Donnan's five-year tenure as principal was the construction of an extension to the north end of the existing school building. The addition, constructed in 1977 at a cost of $377,000, provided several offices, workshops, and five additional classrooms which were needed to replace the temporary ones and to effect changes in the school's curriculum one of which was smaller class sizes for English courses.

Also during Brother Donnan's administration, the school invested $77,000 to overhaul its air-conditioning system, solving a long-standing problem which had created nightmares for the maintenance department. Brothers John Moore and Francis Fleming no longer needed to work miracles to keep the old air-cooled system on the roof running. The new water-cooled system on the ground proved much more cost-efficient and reliable, a joy to faculty and students alike.

In March 1980, the school purchased over 116,000 square feet of land from E. A. Farley Florist, Inc. for $975,150. Twenty-nine percent of the purchase price was proffered as down payment with the remainder taken out as a mortgage at a 10-percent interest rate for the first five years and 13 percent annually until the final payment, due in December of 1990.

Brother Ivy LeBlanc, vice-principal since 1974, took over the school principalship from Brother Donnan at the beginning of the 1980-81 school year. That year the school bought the remaining Farley Nursery property for $754,676, paying 29 percent and financing the balance over a 10-year period. Thanks to Brother Ivy's financial ability, Brother Jean Sobert's fund-raising programs, and a steady enrollment, the two mortgages were paid off in 1984 and 1987.

The purchase of this property next to the school was a significant asset for the school's development. A benefactor paid for the clearing of the nursery and removal of obstacles on the property. Another generous benefactor purchased Mandolin Street, which separated the two parcels of land, from the city for $62,500 and donated it to the school. This person then paid $40,000 to fence the

entire property. The newly acquired property, more than seven acres, doubled the size of the campus of Brother Martin High School and made possible several open fields for athletic teams and physical education classes. Enough land remained for a student parking area.

It was mainly through the efforts of Brother Jean Sobert, Director of Development, that the school obtained the above-mentioned donations necessary to improve the property. Well known in the New Orleans area, Brother Jean had served at the school for more than 25 years in many capacities: as guidance counselor, student activities director, admissions director, and director of community relations and development. In many ways, Brother Jean personified Brother Martin High School to its graduates and to the greater civic community. In a large school with a diverse faculty and more than 1,300 students, Brother Jean had come to represent, in the words of Brother Ivy, *"the welcoming smile, warm handshake, and friendly reminder that you are known by your first name and will be well received at our school. In short, Brother Jean has always been identified as the heart of Brother Martin High School."* (Notes, 1995)

In September 1983, Brother Martin High School lost an outstanding faculty member and science teacher when Brother More Schaefer died of cancer at the age of 50. In his memory, the administration initiated the *Brother More Schaefer Faculty Award* to be presented to a teacher nominated by the faculty for excellence in instruction and commitment to student formation and Christian witness. In 1989 Brother Neal Golden became the first recipient of the award. A national leader in high school computer instruction since 1966 when he started a program at St. Aloysius, Brother Neal was recognized by his peers for his outstanding accomplishments. Assigned to Brother Martin High School since its opening, Brother Neal served as math department chairman, founding chairman of the computer science department, scheduling committee chairman, founder and director of the New Orleans Academic Games League, and moderator of the school's academic games team which won the National Academic Olympics several times. He brought additional national and international honors to the school by publishing several math and computer textbooks and by serving on a number of state and national educational boards such as the Louisiana Computer Literacy Committee and the National Mathematical Science Education Board.

In 1987 the United States Department of Education honored Brother Martin High School as an exemplary secondary school, one of only 33 Catholic schools nationwide to be so named. With advanced placement courses in calculus, English, civics, and physics, the school continued to emphasize a solid curriculum for college preparation. Always on the cutting edge of education, Brother Martin High School, the first school in the state to teach computer

science, remains one of the few schools to offer Computer Science II. Students use computers extensively throughout the school in writing labs for English composition, in math labs, in the library, and in the guidance department. A student sitting at a computer in the school can access books in the libraries of Orleans and Jefferson parishes, as well as at Tulane or Loyola universities. Also, a modem hookup enables students to do bibliographic searches in the Library of Congress. In recognition of its outstanding services, the BMHS library received the Moisette Award from the Louisiana Library Association.

During Brother Ivy's eight-year tenure as principal from 1980-88, his leadership centered on two major themes: the articulation of the brothers' educational vision and the empowerment of lay leadership. The province document *Educational Mission and Ministry* helped him give voice to the brothers' educational charism, and he used it extensively to form lay faculty members, especially potential leaders, to a deeper understanding of and commitment to the brothers' vision. BMHS faculty members have become well acquainted with key EMM expressions from the document such as *religious atmosphere, friendly discipline, family spirit, formation of students, academic excellence,* and *holistic education.*

Throughout the '80s, the ministry of many brothers at Brother Martin High School helped Brother Ivy articulate the brothers' charism in education. Ordained brothers such as Brothers Farrel Lorio, Geoffrey Kerwin, and Ray Hebert assisted in the campus ministry program to help make a religious atmosphere permeate the school. Religion teachers such as Brother Harold Harris helped direct senior retreats. Longtime classroom teachers such as Brother Maurus Bordelon, physics teacher, exemplified academic excellence. In the guidance department, Brother Jerome Lepre took an active role in the formation of students. Brother Henry Gaither directed students in the service-awareness program required by the religion department. In extracurricular service activities, Brother Robert LeBlanc showed students how to put the beatitudes into action and led the Key Club to first-place honors as the outstanding club in the La/Miss/Tenn District.

With the number of brothers in the classroom continually diminishing, Brother Ivy was especially effective in employing semiretired brothers on a part-time basis in various aspects of the school's operation such as tutoring, the bookstore, audiovisual department, maintenance work, and clerical services. Thus, after retiring from the classroom, veterans such as Brothers Blaise Toups, Christopher Cox, Gregory Gru, John Moore, Joseph George, Leo Godin, Lloyd LeBlanc, Marion McCarley, Max Alford, Nicholas Geisenberg, Rene LeBlanc, Rian Messionnier, and Warren Laudumiey continued to have contact with teachers and students. The witness value of their presence in the school played

an important part in modeling the charism that distinguishes the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

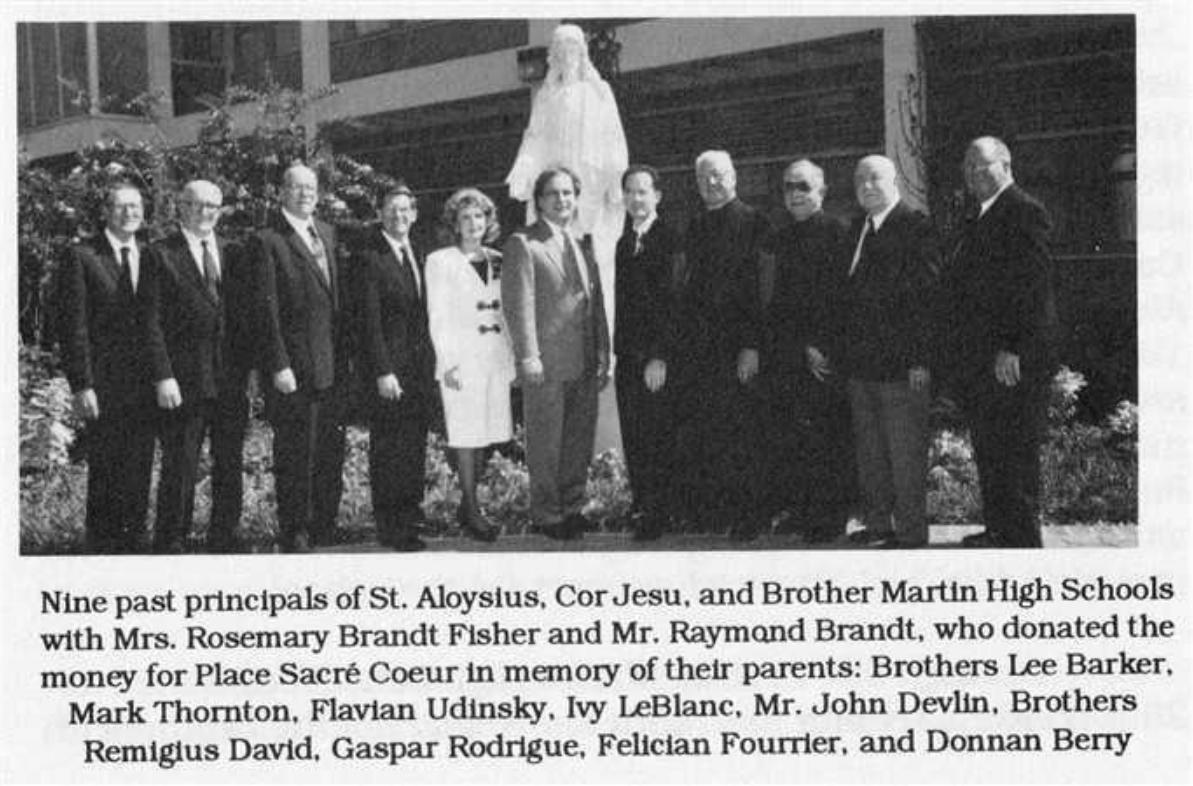
Enrollment at Brother Martin High School reached 1,438 in 1988. That year the provincial council approved a new leadership structure for the school, naming Brother Ivy president and Mr. John Devlin principal. As president, Brother Ivy became chief executive officer of the school; as such he assumed responsibility for assuring that the entire school functioned in accord with the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Mr. Devlin, the first lay principal at one of the brothers' schools, became the school's educational leader in charge of the faculty, students, and the instructional program.

In 1991 the province restructured all aspects of the school's operation under four legal corporations in New Orleans. Brother Martin High School now operates as its own legal entity, but its buildings and land have been leased to the school by another legal corporation, the St. Aloysius Holding Corporation, an outgrowth of the original 1870 charter for St. Aloysius. The St. Aloysius Century Foundation, established in 1969, functions as a fund-raising entity which assures that the school has financial resources to give tuition assistance and make capital improvements. A fourth corporation, the Elysian Fields Property Corporation, holds investment properties such as the two medical buildings adjacent to the school in order to provide additional financial support for the school.

During 1994 Brother Martin High School celebrated its 25th anniversary and the 125th anniversary of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans. Celebrations began January 22 with Mass at St. Louis Cathedral and a reception at the school for about 1,000 people. A spontaneous standing ovation that the congregation gave the 43 brothers in attendance highlighted the evening and enabled brothers to bask for months in its afterglow. Bishop Robert Muench, auxiliary bishop of New Orleans, suggested to the brothers that if ever they were to question the value of their educational efforts they should recall the cathedral full of people, standing and proclaiming by their applause, *"Brothers, it is worth it."*

On September 26, 1994, a day especially chosen in commemoration of the opening day of St. Aloysius College in 1869, a rededication of Brother Martin High School to its mission took place. Bishop Muench blessed the main entrance to the school which had been redesigned and named Place Sacré Coeur. Lieutenant Governor Melinda Schwegmann presented the school with an official Louisiana state historical marker to be erected on the Elysian Fields Avenue neutral ground in front of the school. To the delight of all present students, faculty, brothers, and hundreds of guests its inscription read:

"Brothers of the Sacred Heart: Since 1869 the Brothers and their colleagues have touched the hearts and shaped the lives of the City's youth. As St. Aloysius in the Vieux Carré, Cor Jesu on this site, and, since merging in 1969 into Brother Martin High School, belief in God, love of young people and dedication to excellence have guided their mission." Mayor Marc Morial and Councilman Roy Glapion then announced that Stephen Girard Street had been renamed St. Aloysius Drive and Marigny Street had been renamed Cor Jesu Drive.



Nine past principals of St. Aloysius, Cor Jesu, and Brother Martin High Schools with Mrs. Rosemary Brandt Fisher and Mr. Raymond Brandt, who donated the money for Place Sacré Coeur in memory of their parents: Brothers Lee Barker, Mark Thornton, Flavian Udinsky, Ivy LeBlanc, Mr. John Devlin, Brothers Remigius David, Gaspar Rodrigue, Felician Fourrier, and Donnan Berry

During Brother Martin High School's first 25 years, its students won many awards for their outstanding accomplishments, testifying to the quality of its students and faculty. Traditionally more than two-thirds of the school's professional staff held master's degrees or higher. On the average, one-fourth of each graduating class received scholarship offers from 40 to 50 colleges and universities. Over 80 percent of the students regularly participated in extracurricular activities, many of which brought honors to Brother Martin. The school's academic games teams continually excelled in the National Academic Olympics. The band achieved superior ratings for 17 straight years at the state festival and consistently placed more students in the all-state band than any other school. The chorus, renowned throughout the South, received a medal at the prestigious International Festival in Mexico. The school's NJROTC unit, possibly the best in the United States, regularly earned the *Bravo Zulu* Award for outstanding achievement and caused Brother Martin to be designated a

Naval Honor School, giving its students an advantage in competing for military academy appointments.

During 25 years, Brother Martin High School developed an outstanding athletic program. The Crusaders won many city and district championships in baseball, basketball, bowling, cross-country, football, golf, soccer, swimming, tennis, track, and wrestling. In addition to numerous regional and state runner-up titles from 1969 to 1994, the school claimed one national championship in basketball in 1970 and the following 16 state championships: baseball in 1984; basketball in 1970, 1971 and 1974; cross-country in 1971, 1980, 1981, and 1993; football in 1971; tennis in 1987; and wrestling in 1979, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986, and 1987.

In conjunction with its 25th anniversary celebrations, Brother Martin High School established an alumni association composed of the graduates of St. Aloysius and Cor Jesu as well as its own. Rooted in a strong tradition representing a successful integration of the strengths of the two educational institutions that produced it, Brother Martin High School used the occasion of its anniversary not only to celebrate its past, but also to strengthen its vision for the future. During the year, the faculty updated its curricula and educational methods. The religion department, by adding four teachers to its staff, made religion a full-credit course and offered religion daily to every student. The math department acquired 33 Power Mac computers with CD-ROM capability, allowing students to create three-dimensional and animated imaging. In the areas of computer science and computer applications, BMHS enrolled in 1995 in the New Orleans Free Net to provide unlimited access on the internet to faculty and students, giving each of them an E-mail address. Thus, Brother Martin High School exemplifies a school steeped in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, one remaining on the cutting edge of education while preparing for the new millennium.

Brother Maurus Bordelon, recipient of the Brother More Schaefer Faculty Award at Brother Martin High School in 1996, remains one of the few brothers teaching full-time. Through an administrative restructuring process and the formation of a dedicated lay faculty, the brothers, led by Brother Ivy LeBlanc, president since 1988, have taken means to fulfill their hope of perpetuating their educational charism at Brother Martin High School. Confident that the school will continue to be "a brothers' school" even with only nine brothers working full-time on its professional staff of 90 in 1996, Brother Martin High School's board of directors, chaired by Mr. Thomas Ridgley, launched a strategic development program after three years of planning. It includes a capital campaign to be conducted by the St. Aloysius Century Foundation to raise $8 million for

renovation of the school's buildings. Not only does the plan provide additional facilities for an enrollment that topped 1,490 in August 1995, but it also addresses the school's mission and ministry to assure its spiritual and educational programs.

CHAPTER 20

HOUSES OF FORMATION

New Orleans, Louisiana

Prenovitiate Houses

After the provincial chapter of July 1968 decided that the province would accept only candidates who had finished high school, the juniorate in Bay St. Louis closed. For 1968-69, all entering candidates lived at the scholasticate and attended Spring Hill College. After the scholasticate closed in the summer of 1969, the one remaining postulant lived with several scholastics under the guidance of Brother Marcel Riviere in a small rented residence near the college.

In November 1969, the provincial council approved a newly designed prenovitiate program as presented by the Recruiting and Formation Committee. Its informal structure featured a variable duration, depending on each candidate's background. The program consisted of talks, required reading, and discussions on the religious, academic, social, communal, and apostolic dimensions of the life of the brothers. Trained staff members provided regular spiritual direction. Besides a retreat for discernment, spiritual exercises included daily prayer and Eucharist. The program, open to high school graduates, college students, and college graduates between the ages of 18 and 35, offered an introduction to community living and the brothers' educational ministry.

New Orleans was chosen as the site to implement the new program because of the presence of two Catholic universities and the major seminary, as well as the University of New Orleans all of which could provide courses to fill out the theological and academic background of the candidates. In general, candidates were to be grouped within communities of brothers in New Orleans. But some candidates who already had a college degree were accepted into other houses in the province. With candidates scattered in several communities, the program was difficult to implement. Thus, the provincial council approved $35,000 in April 1970 to purchase a formation house in New Orleans. The brothers purchased a duplex residence at 1920 Robert E. Lee Boulevard, next door to their satellite house at 1930. This enabled candidates to live in community with three or four brothers and benefit from the peer support of other candidates.

Duplex residence at 1930 Robert E. Lee Boulevard which served as a house of formation during the '70s and '80s

In 1970-71 the province had three prenovices. One moved into the 1920 Robert E. Lee residence under the direction of Brother Leo Godin. Two others lived with the brothers at St. Stanislaus under the guidance of Brother Joseph Donovan. In 1971-72 the residence at 1920 Robert E. Lee served as both a novitiate and prenovitiate with Brother Armand Little directing both programs. Two novices, one prenovice, and five professed brothers lived there that year. Another prenovice remained in Bay St. Louis to continue his degree work at Pearl River Junior College.

By 1972-73 the 1920 Robert E. Lee residence was overcrowded, so two candidates moved next door to the 1930 residence which until that time had served primarily for a community of brothers teaching at Brother Martin High School. As the number of prenovices increased, the 1930 residence became primarily a house of formation. In 1974 the provincial council *"approved the recommendation of the Recruiting and Formation Committee for the establishment of one of the brothers' residences, specifically at 1930 Robert E. Lee, New Orleans, as a sort of pre-postulate for those college students who have indicated some interest in the life of a brother."* (Minutes, May 5, 1974) Thus, for the 1974-75 school year, the residence at 1930 Robert E. Lee officially became the prenovitiate house. While most candidates followed the initial formation program in New Orleans, those with university degrees still lived elsewhere. For example, Brother Dwight Kenney lived and taught at St. Stanislaus during his prenovitiate program; and Brother Ray Kuhn lived and worked with the brothers in Houma while he was a prenovice. The Recruiting and Formation Committee's concept of a prenovitiate program in only one location was slowly understood and accepted by the brothers.

With the increase in the number of prenovices and with the desire that they live together in a community of brothers, sufficient housing in New Orleans became a problem. In 1976 the provincial council accepted the recommendation of the Formation Committee *"that the 1920 and 1930 Robert E. Lee residences be operated as one community and that the novices be housed in a residence where private rooms would be available."* (Minutes, April 4-5, 1976) That summer the novitiate moved and the two residences at 1920/30 Robert E. Lee became one local community for seven prenovices and a team of four brothers led by Brother Bernard Couvillion, director of prenovices. Actually the two residences had begun to merge into one community years earlier, sharing prayers and meals together.

On the average, five or six candidates participated in the prenovitiate program annually between 1975 and 1980. About a third of them continued on to the novitiate. In 1980 Brother Raymond Houck replaced Brother Bernard as the prenovitiate director at 1920/30 Robert E. Lee, and he served in that position until 1983. Brother Louis Couvillon then served as prenovitiate director for five years until Brother Eldon Crifasi succeeded him in 1988. By then the number of prenovices had decreased to only two or three a year, so the formation program needed only the 1920 residence. The 1930 residence was then used to house a small community of brothers engaged in diverse apostolates in New Orleans.

In keeping with a recommendation of the New Orleans Housing Task Force, the prenovitiate house was moved in 1989 from 1920 Robert E. Lee to 4671 Painters Street in order to be within walking distance to Brother Martin High School where many of the candidates engaged in apostolic ministry. The

Prenovitiate house at 4671 Painters Street

two-story house on Painters Street was large enough to house several candidates, plus a group of brothers who could work at the high school nearby while serving on the formation staff.

Brother Ray Hebert became director of the prenovices at Painters Street in 1989, the year the program was revised slightly to coincide with the new *Formation Guide of the Institute*. The basic program remained very similar to the one created by the Recruiting and Formation Committee 20 years earlier. Periodic evaluations of the prenovitiate program by the province had proven the value of a team approach to staffing and the insertion of the candidates into a prayerful apostolic community of brothers. In 1996 Brother James Burns, who had succeeded Brother Ray in 1994, moved with the prenovitiate program from Painters Street to the Hospitality Center on Elysian Fields Avenue in New Orleans.

Novitiate Houses

Brothers Ivy LeBlanc and Peter Kosydar, the two last novices from the New Orleans Province to make their novitiate at Belvidere, New Jersey, professed first vows in August 1969. The interprovince novitiate at Belvidere then closed. The New Orleans provincial council voted to suspend the novitiate for 1969-70. The province would have had only one novice, and the council thought it better that he continue his studies another year. In the meantime, the council asked the province Recruiting and Formation Committee to work on a new novitiate program to implement Church directives regarding renewal in religious life.

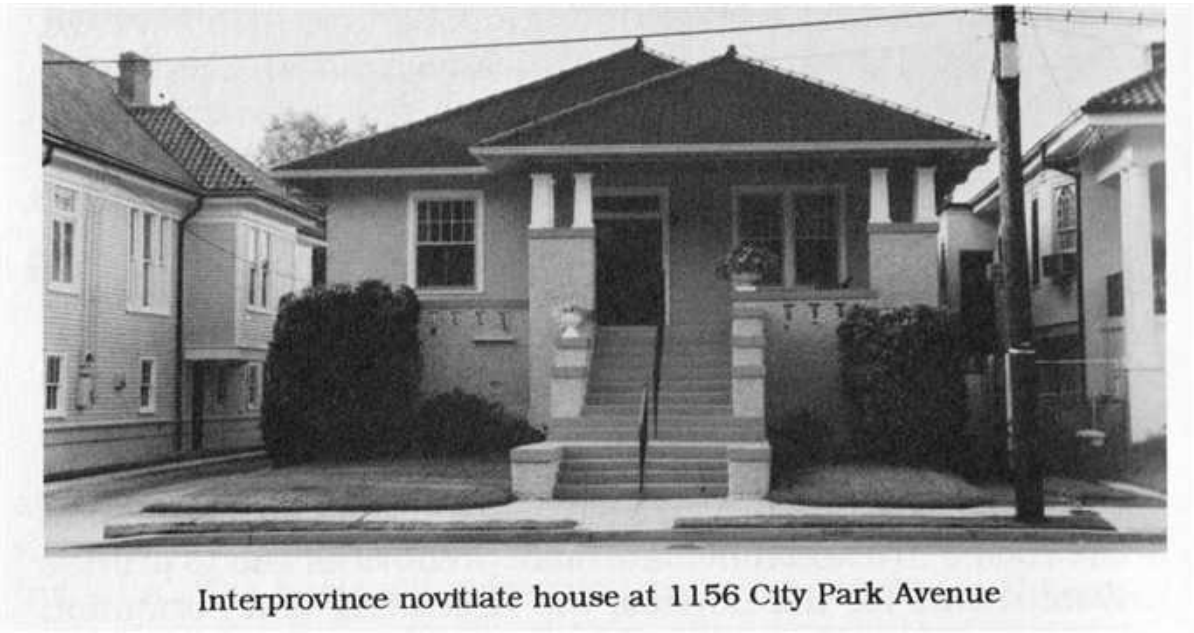
In February 1971, the provincial council completed plans to set up a province novitiate in New Orleans at 1920 Robert E. Lee Boulevard with Brother Armand Little as novice master. On March 9, 1971, Rome approved the plan as designed by the province Recruiting and Formation Committee, and Brothers Harold Harris and William Leimbach became the first two novices in the new program which started on August 15, 1971. The two-year program consisted of four months of study at the novitiate house, six months of studies and apostolic work at a house in the province, six months back at the novitiate, six months of studies and apostolate outside, and two final months at the novitiate before pronouncing first vows.

In 1975 there were no novices, so the novitiate house was used as a house of prayer. The next year, however, there were five novices and seven prenovices. Some novices had to share rooms. To accommodate more

prenovices and to provide private rooms for the novices, the Recruiting and Formation Committee began looking for another residence to house the novitiate. In April 1976, the provincial council *"approved the purchase of a residence on City Park Avenue in New Orleans from the Jesuit order for $50,000 (or $60,000 including all furnishings)."* (Minutes, April 4-5, 1976) In August, Brother Armand moved with the five novices to the new novitiate on City Park Avenue.

Six months later, on February 22, 1977, Brother Armand died unexpectedly. The death of this manly director of novices was a great loss to the province and the formation program. With a deep love for the Institute's traditions and a commitment to the renewal of Vatican II, Brother Armand had chaired the Recruiting and Formation Committee and carefully guided the province to put its new formation program on track.

Brother Paul Montero served as director of novices from 1977 through 1980. In October 1977, members of the Formation Committee met with formation personnel of the New York and New England provinces to find ways of improving programs and sharing resources and personnel. They established an Interprovince Formation Committee. After several years of study and discussion, the three provinces decided to begin a combined novitiate in January of 1981. Advantages of having a larger group of novices and a team of brothers to work with them were obvious, but many details remained to be worked out and agreed upon.



Interprovince novitiate house at 1156 City Park Avenue

The new interprovince novitiate would consist of three semesters, beginning and ending with a reflective phase and including a six-month apostolic phase in the novice's home province under staff supervision. The three provincials would serve as board of directors. After some discussion, the three provinces agreed on 1156 City Park Avenue in New Orleans as the novitiate site. The large house in a calm residential area faced City Park, a spacious park across the street, that provided the quiet and beauty of nature helpful to a reflective program. Also the park provided roadways for walking, biking, and jogging. After some renovations, the house included a chapel, living room, dining room, television room, a library stocked with 1,500 books, a laundry room, a classroom, the director's office, and 12 private bedrooms. Two of the private rooms and the classroom were located in a separate building in the back owned by Dr. and Mrs. John Dubret, gracious neighbors who lent it to the brothers rent free.

Each province agreed to provide one novitiate staff member. The first team consisted of Brother Roland Ouellette of New England, director of novices; Brother Bernard Couvillion of New Orleans, local superior; and Brother William Dowling of New York. In 1981 the first combined novice class comprised three members, Brothers Ronald Hingle and Charles Schilling from New Orleans and Kevin Shea from New York. The next year the house was full with the three second-year novices, plus seven first-year novices: two from New England, one from New York, three from New Orleans, and one from Australia.

In 1984 Brother Bernard became director of novices, with Brothers Francis Corradi of New York and Robert Breault of New England completing the team. After Brother Bernard was elected provincial in 1988, Brother Louis Couvillon succeeded him as director of novices. During Brother Louis's six-year tenure, Brother Thomas Greer from New England and Brothers William Cawley, Joseph Holthaus, and John Spalding from New York served with him on the novitiate staff. In 1994 Brother Daniel St. Jacques of New England was named director of novices with Brothers Ray Hebert of New Orleans and John Spalding of New York on the team. In 1996 Brother Dwight Kenney was named local director of the novitiate community, replacing Brother Ray, who was appointed vocation director.

During the 15 years from 1981 to 1996, 32 brothers made the interprovince novitiate at City Park Avenue: 12 from New Orleans, 12 from New York, three each from New England and England, and two from Australia.

CHAPTER 21

ASCENSION CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Donaldsonville, Louisiana

St. Joseph's Commercial Institute in Donaldsonville, a small community on upper Bayou Lafourche in the civil district of Ascension Parish, was the brothers' second establishment in Louisiana. In 1885 the Rev. John H. Dubernard, pastor at St. Joseph's, asked for some Brothers of the Sacred Heart to teach in the city. The provincial told him that none were available. He built a school and faculty residence anyway, trusting in providence and hoping for a favorable response from the brothers in the near future. After a violent earthquake in Charleston, South Carolina, forced the brothers to close their school there in 1886, the provincial sent some brothers to Donaldsonville in December of that year. For the next school year, the pastor agreed to pay $50 a month for three brothers and $40 a month for any additional ones. Four brothers assumed management of the school of 54 boys, a good number of whose families could not pay tuition. In just a few years, the brothers boosted the enrollment to 135 students.

Since facilities at the school and residence were very primitive, it was a blessing when they were partially destroyed by a severe storm in 1888. The people of Donaldsonville put some public school facilities at the brothers' disposal while repairs were made. This excellent rapport, spirit of cooperation, and friendship between the brothers and the townspeople of Donaldsonville continued during the 82 years that the brothers worked there.

After a fire totally destroyed the school in 1901, Father Dubernard immediately constructed another one along with a two-story residence for the brothers. With the larger residence, the brothers began taking in boarders from outlying areas to increase the enrollment and supplement their meager salaries. The school, a flimsy one-story structure built of cheap weatherboard, had a sheet-iron roof which a hurricane in 1909 simply rolled up. Repairs were made with better materials. But in 1913 Brother Maurice Chatras, provincial, threatened to withdraw the brothers if the new pastor, the Rev. J. M. Massardier, did not provide a safer building for the students. Unfortunately, the brothers did not always enjoy the same good rapport with some of the pastors as they did with the townspeople. The pastor refused; but his parishioners, angry at the possibility of losing the brothers, quickly pledged money for a brick school. Encouraged by the support of the people, the brothers stayed. The brick school, however, was not built. Instead, the pastor constructed a palatial brick presbytery.

After Father Massardier's death in 1916, his successor, Monsignor C. M. Chambon, found the rectory too large for one person and graciously turned it over to the brothers for use as a residence and school. The brothers converted the lower floor into three large classrooms for the high school department and used the upper floor as their residence. An old barnlike building used as an elementary school was moved from Paradise Alley to a new site next to the brick building on the corner of St. Vincent and Iberville streets. It was then renovated. These two buildings were still in use in 1947 when Brother Carol Chassaignac began a six-year term at Catholic High School, the name given to St. Joseph's Commercial Institute in 1930.

Brother Carol, a capable administrator and a colorful character, easily won the hearts of the people and the respect of the pastor, Monsignor Ralph C. Labit, a staunch friend and admirer of the brothers. Under Brother Carol's leadership and the work of the five brothers there, the school prospered. The academic curriculum continued to be college-preparatory with an option for a commercial course. Brother Carol emphasized the athletic program of interscholastic sports; and the school won many championships in football, basketball, and track. In 1953 the school formed its first band which developed into an outstanding playing and marching group. Concerning the respect and pride that the people in Donaldsonville had for their school, Brother Carol commented: *"The brothers and their work are held in high esteem by the people. They are proud of their school; they are proud of the young men who have gone out from it through the years; they are proud of the fine young men who have become priests and religious."* (*Province Monthly*, March 1951, p. 3)

In 1950 Monsignor Labit launched a fund-raising drive for a new and modern school to replace the old dilapidated structures. Plans called for a two-story L-shaped building to accommodate Grades 7-12, both boys and girls. Construction cost was estimated at a quarter of a million dollars. The new school was to be part of a larger renovation program that included plans to remodel the brothers' residence and construct a new convent for the sisters, a gym, cafeteria, auditorium, and rectory. The brothers helped with the fund-raising; in 1951 they sponsored a parade over three miles long led by bands from the brothers' schools in New Orleans, Thibodaux, and Baton Rouge. The parade ended in a huge rally and special supper at which over a ton of crawfish were cooked to make crawfish bisque, a specialty in Donaldsonville.

Before his plans could materialize, Monsignor Labit was transferred. But his successor, Monsignor Edwin Gubler, a "brothers' boy" from St. Aloysius in New Orleans, zealously took up the work. On November 15, 1953, he happily presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for the new school. The school was

built along co-institutional lines with two separate wings, Sacred Heart Hall for the boys and St. Vincent's Hall for the girls. Boys and girls shared central facilities in Marian Hall: a library, science labs, a typing room, a cafeteria, and a gym. At the dedication ceremony in December 1954, Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel of New Orleans congratulated Monsignor Gubler on his vision and his gift of leadership which with fidelity and persistence enabled him to see the project through .

The new red brick and concrete-block school facing St. Vincent Street on the plot between Opelousas Street and Paradise Alley opened August 31, 1954. Ascension Catholic High School, as it was named, was the first co-institutional school where the brothers worked. Ascension Catholic took in the boys from the former Catholic High and the girls from the former St. Vincent's Academy which had been operated by the Daughters of Charity. Because the parish did not have funds to build a new brothers' residence, the brothers remained in the same old dilapidated house which they renovated slightly.

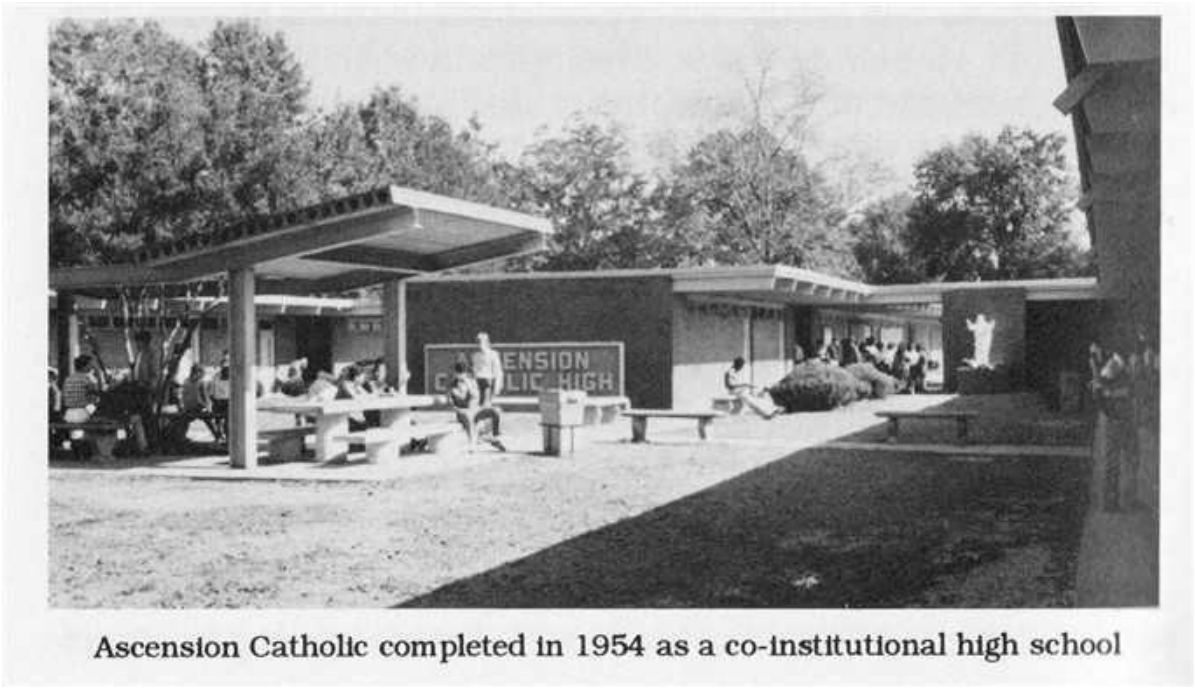
The brothers' residence in Donaldsonville which housed boarders until 1963

In 1953 Brother Bernon Walsh began a six-year term as principal of the boys' division, which consisted of 247 boys in eight classes. Six brothers were assigned to teach classes and prefect the 18 boarders who lived with the brothers. Brother Bernon had been in Donaldsonville since 1948, and the people there loved him dearly. Brother Jerome Lepre, a young brother at Donaldsonville in 1953-55, recalled Brother Bernon as *"the best director I ever had – the kindest ever."* During Brother Bernon's administration, Brothers Rene LeBlanc, Hilbert

Mooney, and Ralph McGarry were among the brothers who served at the school. Each one of them was loved by the students and parents who recognized their dedication and hard work both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.

Brother Augustine Raftery succeeded Brother Bernon as principal in 1959. He had already been at ACHS for six years, so the transition was smooth. Several young brothers such as Brothers Aquin Gauthier, William McCue, James O'Grady, and Dale Dominique worked at D'ville during Brother Augustine's term. School spirit was high, and the enrollment remained at capacity 280 students. The brothers were happy; and the pastor, Monsignor Gubler, worked very well with them.

Brother Adrian Gaudin, a young brother in his late twenties in 1962, replaced Brother Augustine whose health was failing. The staff was reduced to only four brothers, two of whom were ill but still carried a full load. The good will of the pastor began to change. He resented having to pay salaries for two more lay teachers. He felt that his parish deserved more brothers since it was a rich source of religious vocations.



Ascension Catholic completed in 1954 as a co-institutional high school

In 1962-63 the boys' division consisted of eight classes, 132 boys in the high school and 156 in the elementary. Eighteen boarders lived with the brothers. Brother Adrian had his hands full both as principal and local superior, but he handled the situation well. Brother André Robichaud, the provincial, noted in 1963 that Donaldsonville *"was the best run house this past year. Brother Adrian is a real leader religiously and scholastically. He had a tough job with older men but he did very well."* (Report, March 26, 1963) During the

year, Brother Adrian began preparations for the diamond jubilee of the brothers' arrival in Donaldsonville.

At the end of the 1962-63 school year, the brothers stopped taking boarders into their residence and closed the boarding department which had opened in 1901. Brother Eldon Crifasi, the last brother to serve as principal at Ascension Catholic, began his five-year term at the beginning of the 1963-64 school year.

On September 14, 1963, Abbot David Melancon, OSB, a former student, celebrated the Eucharist at a special ceremony commemorating 75 years of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Donaldsonville. Mr. Louis Frey, Jr., Mrs. Lois Landry, and Mr. Vic Marcello headed a committee of 78 volunteers to prepare the gala celebration. Fifty-six brothers attended – nine of them former students at the brothers' school in Donaldsonville: Brothers Lynn Brou, Collin Dugas, Ephrem Falgoust, Martin Hernandez, Dacian LeBlanc, Lloyd LeBlanc, Paul Montero, David Pooley, and Gaspar Rodrigue. Respect was paid to Brother Alphonse Barbier, missionary in Africa, and Brother Benedict Gaudin, deceased both from D'ville. Brother Eldon accepted on behalf of the brothers not only the keys to the city but the keys to a brand new 1964 automobile, a gift from the brothers' many friends, alumni, and benefactors.

Brother Eldon, a very popular principal at Ascension Catholic, impressed parents, clergy, and students alike by his practical piety and concrete charity. Along with most of the brothers who served in Donaldsonville, Brother Eldon left with cherished memories of his years there: *"Parents loved the school and the brothers, and they were very generous with their time in helping out. They often sent cooked dishes to the brothers' house, especially when one was sick. The students were friendly and unpretentious. I've heard several brothers say they would walk back to Donaldsonville if we were to return to Ascension Catholic."* Brother Eldon appreciated the large families in D'Ville, and as principal he devised programs to honor families such as that of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Simon who had 12 children graduate from the school, three of them with perfect attendance.

Unfortunately the brothers were forced to withdraw from Ascension Catholic High School at the end of the 1967-68 school year after having served the youth of Donaldsonville for 82 years. The main reasons for their withdrawal were the decreasing number of brothers available to teach and the increasing financial pressures put on the congregation as a result. The province could no longer afford to subsidize the schools by allowing brothers to work for less than their living expenses. Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, met with the parents

in the school gymnasium in the presence of Bishop Robert Tracy of Baton Rouge and Monsignor Gubler, pastor, to explain to the people the brothers' situation. At the time, each brother in the school was being paid $150 per month by the parish for 10 months. Thus, the community of four brothers received a total of $6,000 for the year which simply was insufficient to meet expenses.

On May 25, 1968, the alumni association sponsored a farewell party and testimonial for the brothers in the school gymnasium. More than 40 brothers who had been principals, teachers, or students in Donaldsonville attended. More than 800 parents, alumni, and friends participated and expressed the high esteem they had for the brothers.

After the brothers left in 1968, the boys' division was staffed by lay teachers and a lay principal at an expense far greater than what the brothers had requested. It operated in this manner for one year. In 1969 it was absorbed into the interparochial school system, and Ascension Catholic High School became a coeducational high school with a lay administrator and a predominantly lay staff with a few Daughters of Charity as teachers.

Indeed it was a sad occasion when the Brothers of the Sacred Heart left Donaldsonville, particularly for those brothers who had worked there over the years and for the many brothers who had entered the community from there. The people of Donaldsonville to this day have not forgotten the brothers, and brothers in turn still cherish many fond memories of their years in this bayou town which was a rich source of religious and priestly vocations.

CHAPTER 22

MENARD MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Alexandria, Louisiana

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart began their work in Alexandria in September 1893 at St. Francis Xavier School. The academy, which enrolled 87 boys, was a simple two-story frame building on Front Street. After lengthy negotiations with the Rev. Leonard Menard, pastor, the brothers finally agreed to manage his parish school, even though he refused their request for a written contract. Many important issues concerning tuition, repairs, insurance, and living quarters for the brothers remained unresolved. These unresolved issues caused much of the contention that characterized the brothers' subsequent relationships with a number of pastors and bishops. Despite the support, friendship, and encouragement of many wonderful people, the history of the brothers in Alexandria was not a happy one. Yet their work there spanned 74 years – years of struggle, sacrifice, and patient suffering.

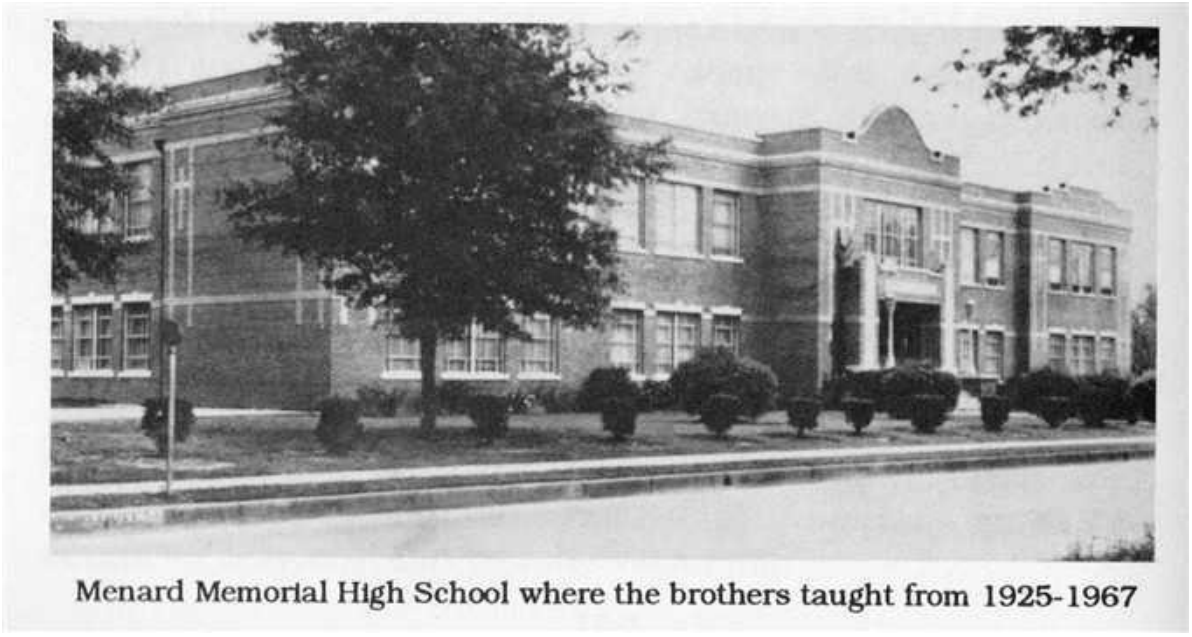
After the church was destroyed by fire in 1895, it was rebuilt in a location better suited to the population. The school was left isolated at the old site. The brothers suffered many financial hardships and took boarders into their residence in order to make ends meet. In 1903 Bishop Anthony Durier convinced Father Menard to move the school next to the church. With the help of the brothers, the school was dismantled and rebuilt at Fourth and Beauregard streets.

Later, Bishop Cornelius Van de Ven took a special interest in the school. With $2,300 in financial assistance from the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, he enlarged the school building in 1915. In 1922 when Brother Macarius Pierce, provincial, visited Alexandria, he spoke to the bishop about the poor living quarters provided for the brothers. Only then did he find out the bishop expected the brothers to assume complete responsibility for all repairs and maintenance of the school and residence. After fire gutted the school in 1923, the parish accepted a bid of $63,433 to build a new one. In 1925 the two-story brick school named Menard Memorial in honor of Father Leonard Menard opened at 19th and Elliott streets. The brothers lived on the second floor of the school.

During the depression years, the brothers again took in boarders in order to survive. During the '40s, there were about 18 boarders and 300 day students. In 1944 when the brothers celebrated 50 years of hard work and struggle for

Catholic education in Alexandria, the bishop, clergy, and patrons praised them highly. In spite of all its difficulties, the school had established an enviable reputation for quality education.

In January 1947, Brother Patrick McDonough replaced Brother Gerald Coridan as principal and director of the staff of nine brothers. In 1948 several capital improvements were made at Menard: a cafeteria to seat 250, a dormitory building for 45 boarders, and a recreation hall. Then in 1949, the province took over ownership of Menard. Negotiations had begun in December 1947, when the



Menard Memorial High School where the brothers taught from 1925-1967

Rev. A. Olinger, pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, the parish in which Menard was located, offered to sell the property and school to the brothers for $85,000. Considering that price exorbitant, the provincial council made a counteroffer of $50,000. (Minutes, Dec. 16, 1947) After almost two years of discussion, in October 1949 Bishop Charles P. Greco sold the school and property to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart for $50,000 with the stipulation that if ever the brothers left Alexandria they would sell both back to the diocese for the same price, plus the cost of improvements. Even though the brothers accepted the diocese's demand to discontinue the elementary grades, they hoped to use the boarding department, with an enlarged dormitory and a full-time prefect, to put the school on a sound financial basis.

Menard Memorial, the only Catholic high school for boys in Alexandria, offered both scientific and commercial courses, along with a solid religion program. Its student body, averaging between 250 and 300 boys, 40 of them boarders, achieved gratifying results. Menard students won first place in physics and geometry in the state literary rally in 1950. An excerpt from a state supervisor's report testifies to the quality education at Menard: *"A spirit of*

conscientious work permeates the whole school. The classroom instruction is exceptionally sound and thorough. The progress in studies, the discipline and attitude of the pupils, and the general management of this institution, all impressed me most favorably." (*Province Monthly*, May 1951, p. 4)

Following Brother Patrick's tenure, Menard underwent several changes of administration from 1951-55. Brothers Felician Fourrier, Harold (Walter) Bluhm, and then Julius Ford served as principal with a staff of 10 brothers and two lay coaches. Aside from frequent changes in administration, overcrowded living quarters made life difficult. Most brothers shared a bedroom and inadequate toilet facilities. Some improvements were made in 1953, but income was too meager to do all that was needed. Money was tight, and many parents were unable or reluctant to pay tuition. Morale among the brothers ebbed, but they carried out their professional duties with dedication and determination. School spirit, however, remained high. In 1955 the Menard Eagles won the district AA championships in baseball and track, beginning a winning tradition that led to 10 consecutive district titles and two state championships in baseball in 1959 and 1960.

Brother Marion McCarley, stationed at Menard from 1948 to 1959, formed an Air Force Junior Reserve squadron in 1954. Sponsored by the Pentagon as a pilot program, it was the first high school unit, and it became the largest cadet squadron in the country. Menard students not only learned English, math, and history, but they also learned how airplanes fly. They proudly wore Air Force uniforms and were delighted when they were sometimes mistaken for airmen stationed at the nearby Alexandria Air Force Base. A Civil Air Patrol squadron in which 90 percent of the student body participated was integrated into the AFJR. In 1957 Menard's crack drill team, the *Garland Rifles,* won first place in state and regional competition and fourth-place honors in national competition in New York City. Many a Menard graduate entered the Air Force as a result of Brother Marion's program.

Brother Hugh Ponthieux became principal in 1955. He gradually improved morale among the brothers who saw him as a dedicated religious and appreciated his community spirit and sincerity. But his abrupt manner in dealing with the public did not endear him to parents, and he was unpopular with the clergy as well. Brother André Robichaud, provincial, replaced him at the bishop's request. By the time Brother Bernon Walsh took over the principalship in 1959, enrollment had dropped to 231 with 34 boarders. There were well-founded rumors that the bishop was planning to build a new diocesan high school, but no one had officially spoken to Brothers Bernon or André. In March 1961, Brother

André reported to Rome: *"We don't know yet if the Bishop is going to build – big secret."*

In the fall of 1961, Brother Donnan Berry began a three-year tenure as principal at Menard Memorial. Always good at public relations, he set about immediately to improve the image of the brothers and their school among the townspeople and the clergy. Enrollment increased to 297 with 24 boarders. With nine brothers and four lay teachers, Menard offered a quality education. Brother Maximin Alford, dean of the faculty, inspired everyone with his enthusiasm and energetic teaching. But Brother Donnan, like so many principals before him, found the ambivalent attitude of the people towards Catholic education difficult to understand. Collecting fees remained a constant struggle, and there seemed to persist a lingering suspicion among some of the clergy that the brothers were somehow getting rich off the school.

Brother Julius Ford, past principal at Menard, retired there in 1962. He was a real morale booster to the brothers and the students who loved to gather around him on the playground to share in his hearty laughter. He was always available to help tutor weaker students in any subject, especially math; and his booming voice could be heard throughout the building. He was a natural socializer who loved small talk, never forgot a name or a face, and enjoyed visiting his many friends in Alexandria.

The Catholic population of Alexandria continued to grow, and by 1963 Bishop Greco's plans of building a new coeducational diocesan high school had become public. Brother André, provincial, had met with the bishop to try to convince him instead to help the brothers and sisters add a couple of classrooms to their schools. Such a solution, he argued, would be much cheaper and more practical. He left the meeting thinking that the bishop agreed, but found out later the bishop had decided to go ahead with a new school and to have it administered by diocesan clergy. The brothers were deeply hurt. When the diocese decided to build its own high school, it in effect forced the brothers to close theirs. The province had no money available to enlarge Menard. Nor did it desire to compete with the new diocesan school. But the bishop wanted the brothers to remain and teach in his new school. The *Annuaire* for 1963-64 reported: *"Negotiations are underway with the Bishop of Alexandria to formulate a suitable contract with the Brothers in the event this school is accepted."* The bishop flatly rejected the council's offer of June 1964 to supply five brothers for the new school at an annual salary of $3,000.

Brother Cosmas Cazayoux was named principal of Menard in July 1964. In November 1964, Brother Hubert Bonnette, a graduate of Menard, became

provincial superior. He met frequently with Bishop Greco regarding the future of the brothers in Alexandria, but he became more frustrated after each meeting because he felt oral agreements were often broken and written ones avoided. Brother Hubert wrote a 36-page report to the superior general in Rome explaining the situation. In his cover letter, dated December 28, 1965, he expressed his frustration: *"The Brothers have suffered because of lack of understanding by certain Bishops . . . and I have done all that I can do to make them understand that the Brothers are human beings with feelings and emotions and have to be treated as intelligent people who are working for the good of the Church."*

The provincial council had decided to close Menard and withdraw the brothers from Alexandria in 1966 when the new school was scheduled to open under diocesan administration. But Bishop Greco insisted that the brothers stay and staff his new school. The provincial council again sent him a proposed contract offering the services of five brothers for $3,000 each, but received no response after two months. The council had other schools to worry about and were weary of the bishop's reluctance to accept its offers. So on April 6, 1965, the council affirmed its earlier decision to withdraw from Alexandria and so notified the bishop.

By the council's next meeting on April 26, the bishop had responded asking the council to reconsider. He found the council's *"demands unprecedented"* and said he would pay no more than a $2,000 stipend per brother. (Letter, April 15, 1965) Even though Brother Hubert had informed the bishop that the brothers' actual living expenses were $2,633.51 each, the council agreed to keep five brothers in Alexandria according to the bishop's terms with the understanding that the diocese would build a brothers' residence near the new school. But at a public meeting in December 1965, the brothers learned that diocese could not keep its commitment regarding the brothers' residence. Brother Hubert then met again with the bishop.

Finally on December 24, 1965, the bishop signed a revised agreement with the province. At the bishop's strong insistence, the brothers accepted to stay for 1966-67 to facilitate the transition to the new school. The diocese agreed to pay four brothers, one of whom could serve as principal, a living stipend of $2,000 each and to provide lodging. The province agreed to return the Menard buildings and property to the diocese in accord with the 1949 agreement.

In the meantime, under the principalship of Brother Cosmas, Menard Memorial graduated 97 seniors in May 1965. Enrollment was 265 students, 23 of them boarders. The staff included nine brothers and seven lay teachers and

coaches. The 1965-66 school year was officially the last one for Menard. Menard Memorial and Providence Academy, operated by the Sisters of Divine Providence, merged into a diocesan co-institutional high school in September 1966, with the Rev. Hugh Biggar the coordinator and Brother Cosmas principal of the boys' division. Because construction of the new school on Gardner Highway was not completed when the school year started, classes were conducted in the old schools with plans to move in January. But that did not happen. The brothers and their students remained at Menard the entire school year. Under diocesan management, the boarding department was closed and tuition raised from $15 to $20 per month. In May 1967, the boys and girls graduated separately, even though it was the first year of Holy Savior Menard Central High School.

At the end of the 1966-67 school year, the brothers left Alexandria quietly after a civic reception at which many people expressed their gratitude. The brothers were saddened upon leaving Alexandria, but also they were relieved after 74 years of struggle. Financially the school there was never successful, and the brothers always had to sacrifice to meet expenses, supplementing their income by caring for boarders. Just a month after the brothers left Alexandria, Brother Cosmas, principal of Menard its last three years, died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 39. Mr. Bill Carter of the *Alexandria Daily Town Talk* wrote, *"Indeed, it almost broke Brother Cosmas' heart to leave Menard."* (July 30, 1967) Hundreds of people attended his wake, attesting to their esteem for this beloved brother whose selfless and tireless efforts in helping others endeared him to them. The field house at Holy Savior Menard Central High School was named in memory of Brother Cosmas.

CHAPTER 23

EDWARD DOUGLAS WHITE HIGH SCHOOL

Thibodaux, Louisiana

Edward Douglas White Catholic High School in Thibodaux, Louisiana, traces its origin back to 1840, making it one of the oldest schools in Lafourche Parish. In 1840 Dr. Charles Shifferstein opened and directed Shifferstein Academy. The state legislature incorporated it in 1859. The Rev. Charles Menard, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, took over the school in 1861 and renamed it Thibodaux College. Then in 1872, Father Menard relocated Thibodaux College on Bayou Road. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart, in response to Father Menard's request, accepted management of the school in July 1891. Several brothers taught in Thibodaux for three years. Then in 1894 they left because Father Menard, who had become feeble and almost senile, would not agree to repair the buildings which the brothers considered unsafe and unfit to live in.

In 1911 the Rev. Alexander Barbier became pastor of St. Joseph's. Thanks to a property donation from Cecilia Blake, granddaughter of Schulyer Thibodaux, founder of the city of Thibodaux, Father Barbier constructed a new Thibodaux College on Bayou Lafourche at a cost of $26,000 in 1912. He then contacted Brother Isidore Balmadier, provincial, to ask the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to staff the school. Unlike many pastors, he willingly signed a written contract with the brothers, clarifying questions of salary and maintenance of the buildings. Thus, after an 18-year absence, the brothers returned to Thibodaux. Four brothers taught about 100 boys for the 1912-13 session and lived in the old Blake home next to the new school. After a fire destroyed the brothers' residence in 1915, the pastor immediately rebuilt it.

During the first half of the 20th century, outstanding leaders such as Brothers Lambert Fairfield and Macarius Pierce, both later provincials, served as principal of Thibodaux College (TC). The brothers there always enjoyed good relations with the pastors and the bayou people. Father Barbier became a real friend to the brothers, and his appreciation of them and their work facilitated the smooth running of Thibodaux College. Any time there was a change in working conditions such as taking in boarders a new contract was drawn up, agreed to, and signed. Thus, the many misunderstandings that plagued the brothers in other parish schools, sapping time and energy from their work, did not occur in Thibodaux.

By 1949 when Brother Casimir Piskorowski succeeded Brother Benedict Gaudin as principal, TC's high school department had been accredited by the state. Brother Casimir, who had first taught in Thibodaux in 1936, was well familiar with the school and its patrons, and the school continued to prosper under his leadership. Enrollment averaged about 220 boys in Grades 4-12. Six brothers on the faculty taught all the classes and minded 15 to 20 boarders for five days a week. The school implemented a solid sports program, making good use of a new stadium built by St. Joseph's Parish in 1948. In 1951-52 a new dormitory building was constructed.

Brother Remigius David succeeded Brother Casimir in 1952. In March 1953, the Fund Drive Committee of St. Joseph's Parish School, under the dynamic leadership of Monsignor Ralph Labit, a Thibodaux College graduate, launched an ambitious campaign to raise $1 million to construct a parochial elementary school for boys and girls and a co-institutional high school. Local businessmen, most of them "brothers' boys," spearheaded the drive. The site was part of a 35-acre plot behind St. Joseph's Cemetery, extending back to Peltier Park. It would be another 12 years before Monsignor Labit's dreams were fully realized with the construction of a new diocesan high school.

In 1954-55 nine brothers taught 330 students in Grades 4-12. The brothers were much appreciated, and they happily worked very hard at Thibodaux College. Brother Leon Stock, for example, taught 38 fourth-grade boys all day long and then coached them after school in the Teeny Tiny athletic program. Then too there were prefecting duties around the clock for the brothers since about 25 boarders slept in the dormitory at Thibodaux College.

In 1955 Brother Carol Chassaignac began a six-year term as principal and local superior. The boys sometimes referred to him as *"Brother Barrel"* because of his huge size and shape. He was well loved up and down the bayou, and wherever he went he built up the athletic program as a means of instilling school spirit. Even though the athletic teams at the old TC rarely boasted of winning seasons, the Cardinals' school spirit and loyalty could not be surpassed. Wherever Brother Carol was principal, the number of young men from that town entering the brothers' preparatory school in Daphne, Alabama, always increased. Under his steady leadership at Thibodaux College, the brothers' popularity grew. In 1960 enrollment reached 339 boys, about half in high school and half in elementary. The number of brothers in Thibodaux was reduced to six by 1960; five lay teachers worked with them.

When Brother Hubert Bonnette succeeded Brother Carol as principal in 1961, he had some big shoes to fill. It was his first principalship, but he proved

more than equal to the task. Under his administration Thibodaux College began phasing out its elementary grades as classes at the new St. Joseph's Elementary School were phased in. Starting with the fourth grade in 1962-63, Thibodaux College dropped one grade level each year up to the eighth grade.

On May 21, 1962, Mr. Harvey Peltier, an outstanding benefactor who believed strongly in Catholic education, made a donation to the Archdiocese of New Orleans of some 600 acres of land in New Orleans East. He stipulated that when the land was sold, a significant part of the proceeds was to be used to construct a new high school as well as to provide for various other educational programs in the Thibodaux area.

Because of its location, the land's value increased rapidly each year, so the archdiocese did not sell it immediately. While holding the property proved advantageous, it did not help relieve immediate financial pressures. People in Thibodaux, aware of the gift, grew suspicious of Church authorities in New Orleans when nothing was done. In 1964 Mr. Peltier amended the original agreement, and shortly thereafter the archdiocese began advancing annual subsidies to the Catholic high school in Thibodaux.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart celebrated their 50th anniversary in Thibodaux in 1963 while Brother Hubert was principal. The Rev. John P. Cody, apostolic administrator of New Orleans at the time, was the main speaker at a banquet given in the brothers' honor. In addition to the many townspeople, several dignitaries attended: Bishop Abel Caillouet, auxiliary bishop of New Orleans; Monsignor Ralph Labit, pastor; Brother André Robichaud, provincial; and Brothers Carol and Remigius, past principals. Also, seven brothers born in the Thibodaux area participated in the celebrations: Brothers Aaron Cortez, Blaise Toups, David Toups, Jean Sobert, Lee Barker, Marcel Riviere, and Quintin Ledet.

In 1964 Brother Louis Joseph Richard replaced Brother Hubert, who was named provincial. By that time lay teachers outnumbered the brothers eight to four. A family spirit of closeness and friendship existed between the brothers and the laymen working with them. A homey atmosphere prevailed, and the entire faculty met regularly in the brothers' community room for coffee breaks. Even though the residence and school looked fairly good from the outside, both were old and rickety and so were being replaced. As the 1964-65 school year ended, construction was well under way on the new co-institutional school, which Archbishop John Cody had broken ground for the previous summer.

The new school, called Thibodaux Central Catholic High School, would be a merger of Thibodaux College and Mount Carmel Academy which the

Sisters of Mount Carmel had been operating for girls since 1855. It would have a boys' and girls' division, each with its own principal in charge of the educational program. To free the principals from financial responsibilities, a diocesan priest appointed by the archbishop would serve as chief administrator or coordinator. Boys and girls would share certain activities and facilities, yet each division was to have its own spirit. Agreements with the archdiocese and the brothers and sisters clearly spelled that out: *"The boys' division at TCCHS should not only be a typical boys' division with the programs, activities, atmosphere, and discipline proper to a boys' division; it should also be a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school, having the spirit, morale, traditions, and high academic standards of schools of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart everywhere. Likewise, the entirely different spirit and tradition that characterize a school staffed by the Sisters of Mount Carmel will prevail in the girls' division at TCCHS."* (Agreement, Article 3, 1965)

Because Hurricane Betsy had severely damaged the old schools, students moved into TCCHS on September 10, 1965, before construction was completed. Brother Louis Joseph recalled: *"I remember clearly the picture of activity that September morning of 1965. Students and teachers were rushing and scrambling to save the drenched and rain-soaked textbooks. Hurricane Betsy had roared over Thibodaux during the night, and now sunlight was shining through the space where the Thibodaux College roof once rested. Prematurely, through necessity that morning, Mount Carmel Academy and Thibodaux College consolidated. With much anxiety, preparation was made to enter the still unfinished building."* (*Quest for Excellence* brochure, p. 12)

The modern $1.5 million school, designed by Mr. Ferdinand Picou, contrasted greatly with the old ones. It was an attractive two-story brick structure with a skylighted area in the center which students named "the astrodome." Boys and girls attended classes on separate sides of the building. Parallel hallways opened onto shared facilities in the center section: various science labs, a library, and a typing room.

Its first year, TCCHS consisted of Grades 7-12 with 238 boys under the principalship of Brother Louis Joseph and 206 girls under the principalship of Sister Marie Therese Broussard. The Rev. Lanaux Rareshide served as coordinator. The faculty included four brothers, four sisters, and 16 lay teachers. From the start, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of Mount Carmel worked well together to form one school, sharing in the rich traditions and charisms of both religious communities.

E. D. White Catholic High School constructed in 1964-65

Next to the school gym stood a new brothers' residence. After Brother Alexis Klee, assistant general, visited Thibodaux in 1967, he reported to Rome: *"The residence is very beautiful, with all facilities and furniture of the best, really too rich for a religious community. But the people, many of whom are well off financially, seem to have had remorse for permitting the brothers to live so long in the old house which had no comfort at all, and insisted on furnishing the residence themselves to which they added the latest model of Buick automobile."* (Report, p. 13) Adjacent to the residence was a beautiful octagonal chapel for use by the brothers and students. Mass was celebrated there weekly; the brothers attended Mass at the parish church the other days.

In March 1966, Archbishop Philip Hannan dedicated the new school. Later that year he renamed it Edward Douglas White Catholic High School in memory of the Honorable Edward Douglass White, a devout Catholic from Thibodaux who served as Supreme Court Chief Justice from 1910-21.

In 1966-67 the last elementary grade moved to St. Joseph's, and the enrollment at E. D. White dropped to 377 boys and girls in Grades 8-12. Brother Louis Joseph had only three other brothers with him that year Brothers Jules Daigle, Linus Meyers, and Ralph McGarry. He told the provincial, Brother Hubert: *"The religious in this house are mature religious. They have labored in many schools, for many years, and the wealth and richness of this experience is most effective in fostering Christian virtue and academic skills in the hearts and minds of students. We are blessed to have these men in our school."* (Report, Jan. 24, 1967)

In praising his confreres, Brother Louis Joseph echoed exactly the sentiments of students, parents, and faculty alike. Brother Linus taught 22 years in Thibodaux, from 1959 until his death in 1980. An extremely effective and energetic teacher, he became such a legend that students felt cheated if they did not have a math class with him. People sometimes affectionately called him "*Brother Hallmark*" because he sent out so many cards to his friends on all occasions. Brother Ralph's presence in the community contributed much to its religious atmosphere and sense of celebration. Many former coaches and athletes still sought out Brother Ralph long after he retired for a bit of counseling, some good old Irish humor, or a storytelling session to relive an exciting game.

In June 1967, Brother Felician Fourrier, director of studies for the brothers since 1960, accepted the position of assistant superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Since he was responsible for the tri-parish area of Lafourche, St. Mary, and Terrebonne parishes, he lived with the brothers in Thibodaux and maintained offices in the E. D. White school complex. He saw to the establishment of a lay advisory board at E. D. White to govern major policies for the school and to assume financial responsibility in setting tuition and salary scales. From the start, the lay board worked very well with the school principal. One of the board's first decisions was to pay the brothers and sisters at E. D. White 40 percent of a lay teacher's salary, plus other benefits, instead of the usual flat-rate living stipend paid to other religious in the archdiocese. The lay board had complete confidence in the brothers and sisters and wanted to assure their continued presence in the school.

Brother Louis Joseph remained principal of the boys' division until 1969 when he was replaced by Brother Paul Montero. In 1969-70, E. D. White, with an enrollment of 380, became totally coeducational with one principal, Brother Paul. The role of coordinator was discontinued. Brother Paul expanded the extracurricular program at E. D. White far beyond its athletic and music programs, both of which were well established and had received many honors in Louisiana and across the nation. The Cardinal football team, for example, which never had a winning season at Thibodaux College had winning seasons year after year at E. D. White, frequently making the state playoffs and winning the state championship in 1968 and 1969 under Coach Pat Szush. The band under the leadership of Mr. Easton LeBouef participated in marching festivals and concert festivals throughout the South, almost always returning home with superior ratings. Other activities at the school were the dance squad, student council, Beta Club, National Honor Society, yearbook, the Key Club, and the Girls' Service Organization.

Parent clubs such as the Cardinal Club and the Band Boosters supported these extra, but essential, activities. The Mothers' Club supplied financial help to the school overall, but especially in academic areas. These three clubs worked together to sponsor *La Fête de Famille,* a family fair featuring fun and food to raise money for various projects such as new uniforms, equipment, and vehicles. These organizations helped pay for an enlarged band room in 1976 and the Moose Olivier Memorial Track which was dedicated that same year.

When Brother Xavier Werneth replaced Brother Paul in January 1976, the enrollment had reached 620. Brother Xavier, a young principal, devoted much energy to the school. He and Sister Barbara Nell Laperouse, assistant principal since 1975, led the faculty in a thorough self-evaluation of the entire school, especially the academic program. The positive results strengthened the faculty's sense of pride and professionalism. In 1979 the school was accredited for the first time by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Also, Brother Xavier reinforced the school's ties with the wider Church and community. After the diocese of Houma-Thibodaux was established in 1977, he served on its first school board and became the founder and first president of the Diocesan Principals' Association. On the local level, the lay school board, chaired by Mr. Troy Thompson and then Dr. Ann Jackson, got much more involved in the school's affairs. In 1980 the development office at E. D. White was created and put under the direction of Mr. Martin Edlefsen, who then went to Notre Dame, Indiana, to learn how to raise funds, organize an alumni association, and establish an endowment fund.

With the addition of Brother Ray Hebert, an ordained brother, to the faculty in 1977, the religious and guidance programs of the school were enhanced. Besides serving as school chaplain, Brother Ray worked with Sister Barbara to develop a full-service guidance department. In addition to the monthly Masses for the entire school community, which groups of students planned under the direction of Sister Denis Rodrigue and Brother John Hotstream, Brother Ray provided religion classes the opportunity of special classroom Masses.

Sister Barbara, as faculty advisor to the Mothers' Club, helped the women to realize that their volunteer work of collecting and selling used clothes at their store, Gym Dandy, was more than a fund-raiser: it was ministry to the poor. By selling much-needed clothing at 25 cents an article, the mothers working at Gym Dandy raised about $15,000 a year to purchase enrichment materials for E. D. White's educational program. Brother John and Sister Denis not only taught students Christian values in their religion classes, but also they witnessed to the

corporal works of mercy through their work with the Key Club and the Girls' Service Organization.

Brother Paul Montero returned as principal in 1982 after Brother Xavier was elected provincial. During Brother Paul's second tenure as principal, the E. D. White Hall of Fame was inaugurated in 1983 with Mr. Harvey Peltier, Dr. Richard Morvant, and Brother Linus Meyers being its first three inductees. Enrollment reached 703 students in 1984-85, and four attractive portable classrooms were constructed to assure that children of families from outside the diocese in the Vacherie and Labadieville areas could continue to be accepted since they had long supported E. D. White.

From 1982-88 Brother Adrian Gaudin was local superior of the brothers in Thibodaux. And from 1983-87, he served as superintendent of Catholic education for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux at Bishop Warren Boudreaux's request. In 1984 Brother Gaspar Rodrigue joined the E. D. White faculty and served until 1994 in the guidance department, counseling the younger students who loved this kind and affable brother whom they responded to as their own grandfather.

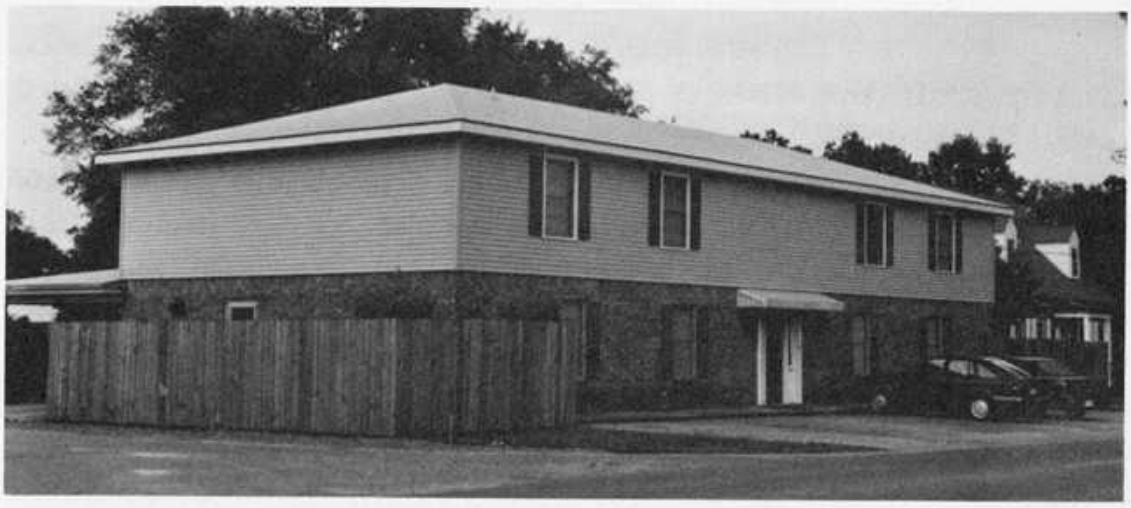
In August 1984, Monsignor James Songy, vicar for the diocese, relayed to Brother Paul the good news that the Peltier property donated in 1962 had been sold for $6 million and that *"over an 11-year period, beginning on July 1, 1986, E. D. White will receive approximately $2,098,800 which represents its 50% share of the net proceeds of the sale as stipulated by Mr. Peltier."* (Letter, August 28, 1984) E. D. White had already received $677,350 of its share in subsidies since 1964. From 1974 through 1986, an annual subsidy of $32,000 had been granted for use as tuition assistance to help needy families. The good news from the diocese could not have come at a better time since the Thibodaux area was entering into a deep recession.

Brother Ray Hebert, who had served as dean of students under Brother Paul, replaced him as principal in 1986. During his three years as principal, an oil slump hit Louisiana. The recession caused enrollment to decline steadily, from a high of 703 in 1985 to only 564 by 1989. It was a difficult period since unemployment hovered at 15 percent, forcing many families to leave the area. Thanks to the school's endowment fund, which had been tremendously enhanced by the Peltier grant, families in financial need were able to receive tuition assistance. But the decline in enrollment directly disturbed other aspects of the school, causing cutbacks in course offerings and faculty members. Thus, school spirit sagged even though athletic teams and extracurricular programs continued to experience success.

Brother Ronald Talbot, a very experienced school principal, began a five-year tenure as principal at E. D. White in 1989. With the leveling-off of the economy, the school enrollment gradually increased from 564 in 1989 to 720 by 1994. The increased enrollment accentuated a major problem at E. D. White since its construction, its lack of a cafeteria or student union. For years students used the facilities at the elementary school next door, but this sometimes presented problems for both schools. Most students simply sat on the floor in the school hallways to eat a lunch which they brought from home. Money was not the only obstacle to building a student union or cafeteria. There was also a question of space since every inch of available land was used by the school's very active sports and music programs. Brother Ronald solved the problem of space by relocating the brothers' residence.

Monsignor Francis Amedee, pastor at St. Joseph's and a longtime friend of the brothers, had been very generous to E. D. White over the years. Besides continued free use of St. Joseph's Stadium and the baseball field on church property, he helped the school financially in many ways. When St. Joseph's Parish and the diocese inherited a large estate from Mrs. Louise Drexler, the parish shared a significant portion of its good fortune with E. D. White. The parish finance committee donated $200,000 to help with the $650,000 construction of the E. D. White student union. The parish also gave $100,000 to the Mothers' Club for a new Gym Dandy store to be built on Jackson Street on a lot donated by the Leslie Badeaux family.

The student union building opened in 1993 and was dedicated in March 1994 by Bishop Michael Jarrell of Houma-Thibodaux. To make the student union possible, the brothers had graciously given up their spacious residence so that it could be remodeled. For 28 years, this brothers' residence had been the



The brothers' residence at 172 St. Joseph Street after remodeling

happy site of many a faculty gathering, formal ones such as Christmas and graduation parties and informal ones after football games and Fridays after school. The province spent about $120,000 to buy a house nearby on the corner of St. Joseph and Menard streets for a brothers' residence. After repairs and remodeling, it served well for the four brothers at E. D. White, who began receiving a full salary from the school.

In 1993 Brother John was inducted into the E. D. White Hall of Fame in recognition of his 14 years of outstanding service from 1973-87 as English and religion teacher and moderator of the Key Club which won many regional and national honors. Brother John endeared himself to hundreds of young people whom he inspired by his zeal and compassion to join him in various community-service projects.

Brother Ronald was very popular and successful as principal, but in November 1993, he announced that he would resign at the end of the school year. After serving for 20 years in school administration in Houma, Baton Rouge, Montgomery, and Thibodaux, he was physically exhausted. Just as the school year was ending, he suffered a heart attack.

Brother Bernard Couvillion, provincial, wrote to Bishop Jarrell early in 1994: *"After a province-wide consultation and three meetings of our provincial council, I regret to tell you that we will not be able to provide a brother-principal for the school year 1994-95. Like many other religious communities we are facing an acute crisis of personnel which makes us unable to meet present manpower commitments."* (Letter, January 3, 1994) Brother Bernard had already met with the E. D. White faculty and school board, as well as with Sister Immaculata Paisant, MSC, diocesan superintendent of education, to explain the brothers' situation.

Mr. Gary Phillips was named principal for 1994-95 with an administrative team of Mrs. Jeanette Labat and Mrs. Myra Luft. All three had served the school in various capacities for more than 20 years. On behalf of the brothers, Brother Bernard pledged the support of the province: *"We will continue to do all we can to provide a community of brothers at E. D. White. As our age increases and our manpower diminishes, we become less capable of assuming roles of leadership. However we will strive to provide a religious presence of support to the school leadership. We pledge our cooperation with the new principal."* (Letter, January 3, 1994) A community of four brothers, under the direction of Brother Carl Bouchereau, remained in Thibodaux.

For more than 85 years, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart have constantly worked with the Sisters of Mount Carmel and dedicated lay teachers in

cooperation with parish authorities to provide the quality Catholic education so strongly desired by the people in Thibodaux. In 1995 when Brother Lee Barker, a 1944 graduate of Thibodaux College, was inducted into the E. D. White Hall of Fame in recognition of his many outstanding accomplishments, the event captured and highlighted the close cooperation that has always existed among so many dedicated families in Thibodaux, their school, and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Today E. D. White Catholic High School serves as a model of commitment on the part of students, parents, faculty, and alumni sharing in a faith community centered around the school.

Past principals of Thibodaux College and E.D. White High School in a group photo at Bay St. Louis in 1990: Brothers Louis Joseph Richard, Paul Montero, Xavier Werneth, Ray Hebert, and Ronald Talbot

CHAPTER 24

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In 1994 Catholic High School in Baton Rouge celebrated its centennial in a first-class manner. A gala program April 22 at the downtown Centroplex culminated the ceremonies with a banquet attended by more than 1,300 brothers, alumni, and friends. His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, was the guest speaker. Also addressing the assembly were Brothers Bernard Couvillion, provincial; Xavier Werneth, general councillor from Rome; and Francis David, president of Catholic High. The following day, the cardinal dedicated a sculpture and wall of honor in the school's new Centennial Courtyard. Entitled *Dialogue of the Heart*, the beautiful life-size bronze sculpture depicts a brother conversing with a student while Christ looks on. The work of art expresses in a powerful way the spirit of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart's dedication to youth. It stands surrounded by granite walls engraved with names of leading contributors to the school's Second Century Campaign for Endowment.

The 100 years of mission and ministry of the brothers in Baton Rouge are colorful ones filled with traditions that still impact the school. The school which Brother Felix Hoffman and three confreres established in 1894 was a parochial school set up under a contract with the Rev. Jean M. Laval, pastor of St. Joseph Parish. The school was named St. Vincent's Academy as a tribute to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which helped the brothers finance the wooden-frame school building facing Church Street (later Fourth Street) on property provided by the parish. St. Vincent's Academy which started with 106 boys soon established an excellent reputation.

In 1928 Father Francis Leon Gassler, pastor at St. Joseph, constructed a larger school, a gymnasium, and residence for the brothers whose work he greatly appreciated. In January 1929, the brothers and students moved into the new buildings on North and Fourth streets. The brick school, named Boys' Catholic High School, accommodated up to 300 boys. Led by such outstanding educators as Brothers Macarius Pierce, Casimir Piskorowski, and Peter Basso, CHS flourished in the '30s and '40s. The brothers had to turn away students for lack of space even though Louisiana State University let the school use nearby Peabody Hall. Father Gassler bought an adjoining residence on North Street for the school's use, but the brothers decided they needed a larger school. On June

5, 1946, Brother Peter, a man of great vision, purchased for the brothers 36 acres of undeveloped land from Miss Mary E. Brunot for $60,000.

Brother Peter dreamed of raising funds to build a new Catholic High on the property between Government Street and Claycut Road, an ideal location for the shifting population in Baton Rouge. He envisioned a much larger school, owned by the brothers, with large playing fields for an expanded athletic program. But in September 1946, Brother Peter was transferred to Bay St. Louis to serve as principal at St. Stanislaus. Then, after a brief bout with cancer, he died in 1948. Brother Peter's dream did not die with him, however; it would be fulfilled eight years later.

In 1946 Brother Casimir, who had served three years as principal of CHS earlier, returned for another three years. He organized the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade which together with the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart formed the main religious organizations on campus. The 'C' Club was reorganized to support athletic programs. In 1948 Brother Remigius David started the *Bruin*, the school yearbook, which received a first-class national rating that year and began a long tradition of honors leading to All-American ratings. Journalism was always strong at CHS; and the school paper, *The Golden Bear*, also won All-American ratings.

In 1949 Brother Benedict Gaudin began a six-year term as principal-director. CHS then consisted of 620 students in 15 classes conducted by 22 brothers. In 1950-51 the lower grades were discontinued, and the high school enrollment leveled off at about 475. The school's academic program remained primarily college-preparatory with some commercial classes. CHS continued to emphasize a good extracurricular program, and the Bears' baseball team won its first state championship in 1953 under Coach Melvin Didier.

Brother Carol Chassaignac served a very busy year as principal in 1954-55. School spirit was high because in 1955 the Bears won district championships in basketball and baseball. And that was the year Brother Peter's dream for a new school became a reality. On May 8, 1955, plans for a new Catholic High School were published in the *Catholic Action of the South*. Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, and Brother Carol participated in a special conference composed of brothers, clergy, and laymen. Among those representing the clergy were Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel of New Orleans (Baton Rouge was part of that archdiocese until 1961), Auxiliary Bishop Abel Caillouet, and Monsignor Herman Lohmann, pastor of St. Joseph Parish where Catholic High was located. Laymen were Messrs. Andrew Bahlinger, Lancaster Collens, Ralph Dupuy, and Clifford Ourso. Plans called for raising $800,000 to build a new Catholic High

School consisting of 24 classrooms, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, and complete athletic facilities. The old buildings would be converted into a parochial elementary school for boys and girls to be conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The province forwarded $30,000 to hire the firm of Harry Newcombe and Company of Ridgewood, New Jersey, to direct the capital campaign. It was the first time one of the brothers' schools hired professional help for such a purpose.

In September 1955, Brother Remigius David succeeded Brother Carol as principal at Catholic High. During Brother Remigius's six years of administration, the new Catholic High became a reality. On December 23, 1956, the archbishop presided over a groundbreaking ceremony at the new campus on Hearthstone Drive. Earlier that month construction bids had been opened and Mr. Charles Carter had the lowest at $480,900. Plans had to be scaled back considerably because the fund drive had netted only $345,000, including pledges. Final costs with furnishings, however, amounted to $750,000, putting financial pressure on the province, which borrowed money to cover more than half the cost. Already pressed for funds, the province had sold off 16 of the 36 acres purchased for the new school 12 acres in 1948 and four more in 1954.

Front of the main school building facing Hearthstone Drive

Even though the building was not quite completed, the new Catholic High opened its doors to 450 students on September 4, 1957. For the first week of school, it operated on a dual shift basis, with seniors and juniors coming one day and freshman and sophomores the next. The building was a modern one-story brick and glass structure designed by the architectural firm of Post and Harelson as a split-level construction to match the sloping terrain. It had nine

regular classrooms plus three classrooms with science labs, a library, a guidance office, a principal's office, and an activity room.

The brothers' new two-story brick residence next to the school would not be ready for occupancy until January 1958. In the meantime, the brothers vacated their former residence at St. Joseph and lived at the old St. Agnes rectory where Monsignor Patrick Gillespie, pastor, graciously welcomed them. This temporary living situation was very inconvenient for the brothers, but the move was necessary to relieve some of the tension that had developed over the years between the brothers and Monsignor Herman Lohmann, who as pastor at St. Joseph had often attempted to extend his authority into school affairs.

On September 7, 1958, Archbishop Rummel presided over the dedication of the new school on Hearthstone Drive. He also blessed the Sacred Heart shrine in front of the school in memory of Brother William Henry Gibbens, a Baton Rouge native, who died in 1951 following a long illness. Brother Martin, provincial, pointed out at the school's dedication that *"although the building cost $750,000, it is inadequate. Four more classrooms, a cafeteria, band room, and athletic facilities could be used immediately."* (*Province Monthly*, October 1958, p. 1)

Brother Carol returned as principal in 1961 and began immediately to address the problem of enrollment which had dropped to a low of 370. His solution, as always, was to build up the athletic program to attract students. He set about planning for a much needed gymnasium-auditorium. He had the total support and encouragement of Bishop Robert Tracy, who had been installed as the first bishop of Baton Rouge in 1961. Besides donating $50,000 for the construction, the diocese loaned CHS $150,000 at 5-percent interest. The province picked up the balance to cover the $241,910 construction bid. In 1964 the CHS gym-auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,700, locker room facilities, coaches' offices, a large stage, restrooms, and a lobby opened for use.

During Brother Carol's three-year term, extracurricular activities such as the Confraternity, the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, the Vocation Club, the Key Club, the band, the Beta Club, and the National Honor Society continued to develop as an integral part of the school's total program. The curriculum continued to cater to college-bound students. Catholic High School boasted more alumni in medical school than any other high school in the state. (*Province Monthly*, April 1963, p. 2) But it is not for these reasons that Brother Carol is best remembered in Baton Rouge. Rather it is the fact that he was principal in 1963 when the Bears beat Istrouma (15-12) in football the first time since 1936.

Racial integration at Catholic High School took place in 1964 when the school welcomed its first few black students. Under the leadership of Brother Hubert Bonnette, newly appointed principal, classes began calmly as usual in September. In October Brother Hubert left for the general chapter in Rome. Then in November he was named provincial superior, and Brother Donnan Berry began a 10-year term as principal until 1974. An outstanding administrator, Brother Donnan went to work immediately with Brother Adrian Gaudin to develop a good public relations program to address the issue of the school's sagging reputation. He reorganized the CHS Lay Advisory Board and strengthened the school's shaky financial base which was further weakened in 1965 when Hurricane Betsy inflicted $75,000 in damages. He worked hard to increase enrollment by sponsoring open house activities. In 1966 CHS began accepting an eighth-grade honors class.

Brother Donnan solidly established the school's academic program while maintaining strong sports and activities programs. He vigorously petitioned provincials to increase the number of brothers on the staff, especially young and energetic ones; and he actively recruited talented lay teachers to strengthen the faculty. In 1966 under his leadership Catholic High School was accredited for the first time by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Brother Gordian Udinsky, who taught at Catholic High from 1961 until his death in 1983, heads the list of the many outstanding teachers at Catholic High. In 1965 he welcomed girls from nearby St. Joseph's Academy into his renowned physics classes. Many men in Baton Rouge today still recall the "*boot camp*" that he gave them as ninth-graders in earth and space science class. Their initial fear of this intimidating giant who stood 6 feet 5 inches and weighed more than 300 pounds soon turned to respect as they recognized his exceptional ability to teach. In 1968 the American Association of Physics named the CHS physics department, headed by Brother Gordian, one of the top 10 in the nation.

Beginning in the mid-'60s, Brothers Adrian Gaudin, William Bergeron, and Xavier Werneth worked to establish a strong English department at Catholic High, placing a heavy emphasis on literature and composition. In 1969 the National Council of Teachers of English awarded the CHS English department a certificate of excellence in recognition of their efforts. During that same period, Brother Virgil Harris built up the school's music and band programs.

In 1967 the role of principal was separated from that of local superior, and Brother Warren Mendelson began a five-year term as director of the brothers' community. This change not only relieved some of the pressure on Brother Donnan but also it permitted him to continue as principal past the six-

year limit set by canon law for religious superiors. At the time there were 18 brothers at Catholic High, and they frequently met to discuss changes in religious life encouraged by Vatican II. The role of director was not easy, especially given the brothers' differences in age and theology, which generated some lively discussions. Catholic High was blessed with a number of older brothers, such as Brothers Julius Ford, Luke Tressel, and Gerald Coridan, whose religious dedication could not be questioned even if they could not appreciate all of the changes mandated by Vatican II.

Because the large residence next to the school on Hearthstone Drive was overcrowded, the province purchased for $25,000 a two-story house at 2021 Terrace Street. Four brothers assigned to Baton Rouge in 1969 but not working at Catholic High lived there. Forming the new small community were Brothers Felician Fourrier, director, who served seven years from 1970-77 as diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools; Bernard Tunney, who was principal of St. Joseph Day Seminary for six years from 1967-73; and Godfrey Albert and Raymond Houck, who were working on doctoral degrees at LSU. Five years later, when the house was no longer needed, the province sold it for $34,900.

In order to experience small-group living in religious life, in 1971 seven of the younger of 19 brothers assigned to Catholic High moved out of the large institutional residence on the school campus. They rented two family-type houses in Walnut Hills neighborhood, one at 1928 Avondale Drive and the other at nearby 4724 Woodside Drive. The next year, rather than paying rent on two houses, the province purchased for $35,000 a large two-story wooden house at 1757 Avondale Drive and renovated it to accommodate seven brothers. This house served the brothers for 17 years until 1989 when the 12 brothers remaining in Baton Rouge were again merged into one local community on Hearthstone Drive.

In 1971 CHS graduated eight semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Brother Donnan designed and put into place an elaborate awards program featuring impressive Golden Bear Awards for the best student in each subject and student organization, the outstanding graduate, and the top 10 seniors. Also he instituted the Hall of Fame to recognize leaders in the school community who were connected to CHS in some way and who might serve as role models for students. During the 30 years since its establishment in 1966, 12 brothers have been inducted into the Catholic High School Hall of Fame: Brothers Benedict Gaudin, Carol Chassaignac, Cosmas Cazayoux, Donnan Berry, Eldon Crifasi, Felician Fourrier, Felix Hoffman, Gerald Coridan, Gordian Udinsky, Peter Basso, Remigius David, and Xavier Werneth.

Two brothers have been inducted into the school's athletic hall of fame known as the Grizzly Greats. Brother Bernon Walsh, who served at Catholic High for more than 30 years, was honored for his outstanding work as boxing coach back in the '30s, and Brother Ralph McGarry was honored as an exceptional basketball coach. The positive influence that these two brothers had on so many student athletes is still fervently talked about by the old-timers at the CHS Men's Club annual stag barbecue.

Under Brother Donnan's leadership as principal, Catholic High's reputation grew and more students applied, but the cramped facilities could not handle more than the 440 boys enrolled in 1970-71. Brother Donnan approached friends and benefactors to solicit financial help. In 1971 the area between the school and gym was enclosed at a cost of $15,000 and named the Roe F. Cangelosi Mall in memory of this benefactor. In 1972 a south wing on the main building was constructed to provide six additional classrooms with adjustable walls, a spacious library with three seminar rooms, and a large multipurpose student union. This major construction cost $250,000 and was financed entirely by benefactors since the province was too heavily in debt after Hurricane Camille to assist.

Across Centennial Courtyard (1994) toward the student union built in 1972

Brother Brendan Butler followed Brother Donnan as principal in 1974, and Brother Herman Boland became local superior on Hearthstone Drive. Brother Louis Couvillon had begun a long term as religious superior on Avondale Drive the previous year. During Brother Brendan's two years of administration, the guidance staff was expanded to cover a full range of services, and a guidance complex was established. The years 1974-76 were memorable ones for the CHS athletic department. Head football coach, Mr. Barrett Murphy

was named coach of the year in District 7-AAA in 1974. The next year, the wrestling team won first place in the state, and Mr. Pete Boudreaux's cross-country team became the first high-school team in the nation to score a perfect 15 in state competition. In 1976 the baseball team won the state title.

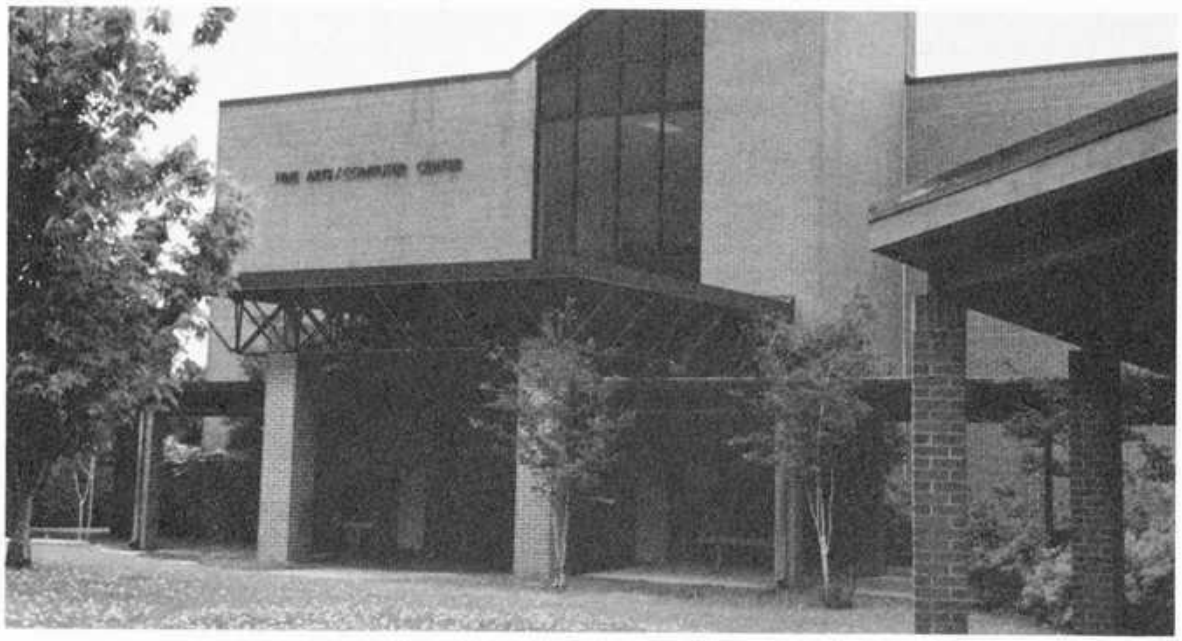
As principal from 1976-80, Brother Adrian Gaudin built up the school's academic program once again. He added music and fine arts to the curriculum and reactivated the drama department after a 10-year lapse. Brother Adrian, who had moderated the *Bear Facts* back in 1965 when John Maginnis was student editor, encouraged Mrs. Jan Breen to revive the school newspaper under the title *Bearly Published*. With assistance from Brother Will McCue, campus minister, Brother Adrian extended the retreat program to include all grade levels and involved faculty members and parents in the retreats. Also, he reinstated overnight retreats for seniors and required them to contribute at least 100 hours of community service before graduating. In 1978 Brother Adrian named Miss Phyllis DiVincenti to coordinate the school's many student activities. He further developed the concept of team administration at CHS by enlarging the team with additional lay men and women: Mr. John Molstad as dean of students and Mrs. Merle Dooley as academic assistant principal. In the spring of 1980 Brother Adrian worked with the parents in the Men's Club and Mothers' Club to air-condition the main school building.

When Brother Ronald Talbot became principal in 1980, he welcomed the return of Brother Donnan who steadily built up a development department over the next 13 years. Two houses on Hearthstone Drive across from the brothers' residence were purchased and used for offices. In 1981, with a solid development program in place, an all-weather track, a baseball field, and new parking facilities were added to the campus. Brother Ramon Daunis maintained these and other facilities on the campus for 20 years, from 1970-90.

By 1982 enrollment at Catholic High reached 664 boys with 35 eighth-graders. The faculty included nine brothers, two Sisters of St. Joseph, and 32 lay men and women. Brother Carl Bouchereau, who ministered at CHS from 1981-94, joined the guidance department which was headed by Sister Kathleen Brogdon, CSJ, a mainstay at CHS since the early '70s. Catholic High's academic program continued to be excellent, and 96 to 99 percent of its graduates went on to college.

Brother Ronald initiated the computer science program at CHS and began plans with Brother Donnan for the next building phase at the school, to be totally paid for by donations. In 1985 a two-story fine arts and computer center was dedicated by the bishop of Baton Rouge, Bishop Stanley J. Ott, a "brothers'

boy" from New Orleans. The new building cost $1.5 million, half of which was given by one anonymous alumnus. The new complex contained five classrooms, a computer laboratory, a chorus room, art and drafting rooms, and band rooms. By this time the curriculum included three computer science courses and three art courses.



The 18,000-square-foot Fine Arts/Computer Center completed in 1985

In 1984 Brother Francis David began a long term as principal, lasting until 1993 when he was named president of Catholic High School. During his nine years as principal, he ushered Catholic High School to the forefront of educational excellence. Toward the end of the 1988-89 school year, Catholic High School was recognized by the United States Department of Education as one of the outstanding secondary schools in the nation. It was one of 218 *"exemplary"* schools in the country and one of only five in the state. Brother Francis accepted the award at the White House from President George Bush in the fall of 1989. Before making such an award, the Department of Education examined and evaluated Catholic High School's philosophy, programs, and practices, focusing on leadership, learning environment, and institutional vitality, as well as on parental and community support.

Truly 1988-89 was a banner year for CHS. It had the largest freshman class in its history. The campus ministry department, under Ms. Judy Stewart, initiated a peer ministry program to enhance the spiritual life of the students. The school's 10 varsity athletic teams all took first or second place in district or regional competition; and the cross-country team, now known as the *Big Orange Wave*, won its ninth state championship. The Key Club placed first in

the region in the gold division. The school newspaper won the state sweepstake award, and both the newspaper and the yearbook earned a first-class national rating. Students that year attained the highest ACT and SAT scores in the school's history with a composite average of 22.8 on the ACT and 1190 on the SAT.

Reaping success upon success, on June 11, 1993, Catholic High School was again named an *"exemplary"* school, making it one of only 44 high schools to be so honored twice. It was one of four schools in Louisiana and 208 in the country honored by the federal government's blue ribbon secondary school program in 1993. Again the principal was invited to the White House, this time during President Bill Clinton's administration, to receive the National School of Excellence Award. Also in 1993, 14 CHS seniors were named National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, shattering past records.

Catholic High School began its centennial year with a special Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated on August 21, 1993, at St. Joseph Cathedral. On August 27 city officials placed a historic marker at the corner of Fourth and North streets, the original site of St. Vincent's Academy. In the 100 years since its humble beginnings there, the school had produced 5,963 graduates. With a record enrollment of 765 for 1993-94, Catholic High promised to produce many more graduates. To assure the financial means to do so, in 1991 school officials had launched the Second Century Campaign for Endowment. By 1993 the campaign surpassed its $2.5 million goal with gifts and pledges totaling over $3.8 million. Much of the credit goes to Brother Donnan Berry who headed development efforts at CHS beginning in 1980 until July 1993, when he was transferred to Bay St. Louis to be local director.

In 1993 Dr. Gregory Brandao, a 1973 Catholic High School graduate, became the school's first lay principal. After working with the brothers for nine years in New Orleans, Dr. Brandao returned to Baton Rouge in 1986 to serve as Catholic High's academic assistant principal. In 1989 he was named vice principal. Now as principal he works closely with Brother Francis, president. Under this new administrative format, Catholic High School is incorporated and operates with a board of directors made up of both religious and laity.

The 1994-95 school year was especially difficult for the brothers' community in Baton Rouge due to the deaths of three of its members Brothers Bennet Bishop, Felician Fourrier, and Bernon Walsh. Nevertheless, the brothers continued to offer hope for the future of CHS. Among the eight brothers in Baton Rouge for 1995-96, five remained involved in the school while others worked in the wider community. Brother Francis David continued to lead the school as

president. Brothers Aquin Gauthier and Eldon Crifasi, well known and respected natives of Baton Rouge, headed the development and alumni offices. Brother Will McCue served as chaplain and coordinator of the Christian Service Experience. Brother Michael Dawson, a beginning teacher, helped carry forward Catholic High School's tradition of quality education and Christian formation.

Six principals of CHS with His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Bernardin at the centennial banquet in 1994: Brothers Ronald Talbot, Adrian Gaudin, Remigius David, Dr. Gregory Brandao, Brothers Francis David, and Donnan Berry

CHAPTER 25

VANDEBILT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Houma, Louisiana

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart began their work in Houma in 1952, but that was not the beginning of Vandebilt Catholic High School. Its roots go back to 1870 when the Marianites of the Holy Cross opened the first Catholic school in Houma on their property at Point and Barrow streets under the title Academy of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The school's name was changed to St. Francis Academy in 1879 and later to St. Francis de Sales High School, the foundation upon which Vandebilt Catholic High School was built.

Originally the sisters taught only girls, but in 1890 they accepted boys. By 1918 there were so many boys enrolled that they were transferred to a separate boys' school next to St. Francis de Sales parish church. The sisters still taught them. The Rev. August Vandebilt, pastor of St. Francis from 1914 to 1938, watched over the boys' and girls' schools and supported the sisters in their work of education. With the development of the oil industry around Houma, the growing population put a heavy strain on school facilities. In 1952 the Marianites responded to the need by opening a new school on Verret Street, next to the church, to serve as the boys' and girls' elementary school and the girls in Grades 8-12. St. Francis Boys' School for Grades 8-12 then moved into the original wooden school building on Point and Barrow streets. There they were still close enough to share the laboratories and cafeteria facilities in the new school on Verret Street.

Monsignor Maurice Schexnayder, who succeeded Father Vandebilt as pastor of St. Francis de Sales, was a good friend of the brothers, having been a "brothers' boy" in Donaldsonville and a classmate of Brother Martin Hernandez. Monsignor Schexnayder approached Brother Martin, who had become provincial superior in 1949, about his plans to obtain brothers for St. Francis Boys' School. In September of 1952 these plans materialized. By then Monsignor Schexnayder had been named Bishop of Lafayette, so Brother Martin concluded negotiations with his successor at St. Francis, Monsignor Joseph Wester.

Houma, a small city situated on Bayou Terrebonne in south Louisiana, served as the seat of Terrebonne Parish and was a center of the oil industry in

the state. Also, Houma was prominent in the seafood-canning industry. Many of the people were *Cajuns*, whose grandparents had been exiled from Nova Scotia or Acadia during the French and Indian War. When Brother Casimir Piskorowski and his four confreres first arrived in Houma in 1952, they discovered that some of the boys spoke French at recess. One of those first five brothers was Brother Donald McGrath, an outstanding math teacher who retired in 1994 after 56 years in the classroom, the last 16 of them at Vandebilt. In December 1994, Brother Donald was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame.

Located next to the sisters' convent on Point Street, St. Francis de Sales Boys' School was about six blocks from the new St. Francis de Sales Girls' School which was staffed by the Marianites of the Holy Cross. The boys' school consisted of five classrooms with a total enrollment of 125 in Grades 8-12.

Living conditions at the Point Street school were Spartan. There was no air-conditioning or central heating in those times. On cold days, tiny gas heaters kept the temperature just above the freezing point. Windows were not insulated and the flooring was old and decaying. The brothers in Houma joked, as did those in Donaldsonville, that during recess the boys could catch crawfish through the cracks in the floor.

The brothers lived in a house provided by the parish on Crescent Boulevard about a mile away from the school. For many years stories about the lack of furnishings in the house circulated around the province. When the brothers first arrived there, only beds were provided, no tables or chairs. So the brothers simply sat on the floor until they could secure sufficient furnishings. They soon sat in chairs since a group of influential parents, led by Doctors Ernest, Rudolph, and Henry Ellender and their wives, along with Dr. Lawrence Haydel, proved to be extremely helpful in obtaining necessities for the school and residence.

Brother Casimir, an experienced principal, was well known in school circles as a man dedicated to education. And the brothers, through their effective teaching and friendship, quickly established a good rapport with their students. As they did at most schools they conducted, the brothers emphasized sports at St. Francis. Mr. Lucas "Buddy" Marcello had been at St. Francis since 1950, and his outstanding coaching led the Terriers to their first state championship in baseball in 1952. With the support and encouragement of the brothers and the help of the newly founded Terrier Club, Coach Marcello built a solid athletic program around the major sports of baseball, football, and basketball.

In 1954 Brother Alfred Kolb first arrived in Houma to replace the principal and local director. Brother Casimir's long hours playing golf and visiting friends had reaped many material benefits for the school and house but had caused certain morale problems within the brothers' religious community. Brother Alfred was well liked as superior and principal. In spite of a full teaching load, he managed the school so that it prospered both educationally and athletically. With the addition of Brother Ashton Brisolara to the staff in 1954 as well, the brothers' popularity soared. Brother Ashton easily captivated his students' interest with his expertise in coaching tennis, basketball, and golf, as well as teaching.

On the feast of St. Francis de Sales, January 28, 1958, a new sisters' convent was dedicated next to the church. Subsequently the boys' school moved into the vacated convent, and the old school was demolished. In December of that year, Brother Alfred left for the African missions in Kenya, and Brother Bernard Tunney replaced him as principal. A strong physics and math teacher, Brother Bernard built up those departments to make them among the best in Terrebonne Parish. A strong supporter of athletics, Brother Bernard had the privilege to see the Terriers win their first state championship in football in 1959.

Brother Bernard suffered a heart attack in 1961, and Brother Gaspar Rodrigue became principal. During his five-year tenure, he encouraged students to participate in local and state literary rallies. While Brother Gaspar continued to boost the academic standing of the school, he saw the athletic program flourish as well. In 1962, St. Francis Youth Center was built near the church at a cost of $239,000. With a seating capacity of 700, it opened just in time for basketball season. And in baseball the Terriers won their ninth state championship in 1963 and their 11th district title in 13 years.

Brother Gaspar worked conscientiously with members of the parish and the Archdiocese of New Orleans in planning a new Catholic high school in Houma to consolidate the boys' and girls' schools. In May 1964 ground for the new school was broken west of downtown Houma on a spacious tract of land on South Hollywood Road. The school was built on what had been a sugar cane field, and its 20-acre campus at that time was totally surrounded by cane fields. Designed to be operated as a co-institutional school with separate classroom wings for boys and girls and with some shared facilities, the two-story yellow brick school consisted of 27 classrooms, two science labs, a library, a cafeteria, a home economics department, a band room, a guidance room, an administrative office complex, and a chapel large enough to seat 70 persons. Other facilities which were completed in May 1966 at the end of the school's first year included

a large gymnasium-auditorium, a 2,500 capacity football stadium with a track, a baseball diamond, and a field house containing athletic locker rooms and shower rooms. Total cost of the new school was about $2 million.

On September 1, 1965, the new school, named Houma Central Catholic High, opened its doors to 346 boys and 378 girls in Grades 7-12. It accepted students of all races, making it the first integrated secondary school in Terrebonne Parish.

Vandebilt High School which opened as Houma Central Catholic in 1965

Brother Brice Hendrick was named principal of the boys' division; and Sister Mary John Evangelist, MSC, was principal of the girls' division. The Rev. Emile LaFranz, a diocesan priest, was overall coordinator and in charge of finances. Monsignor Gerald Frey, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church, chaired an advisory board appointed by the archdiocese.

When the school year began, the brothers' residence on campus had not been completed, which caused certain inconveniences. Then in September Hurricane Betsy hit Houma and damaged the gym which was under construction and still without a roof. School windows were broken and rain blew in, but the four brothers mopped up during and after the storm, minimizing damage to the floors. Classes had to be canceled for only four days following the hurricane.

The consolidated faculty consisted of four Brothers of the Sacred Heart, six Marianites of the Holy Cross, two School Sisters of Notre Dame, two Sisters of St. Benedict, and 20 lay teachers, totaling a faculty of 34. Archbishop Philip Hannan of New Orleans dedicated the new school as Vandebilt Catholic High School on March 27, 1966, in honor of the Rev. August Vandebilt, longtime pastor of St. Francis de Sales and a great promoter of Catholic education.

Because of the unwieldy nature of a two-divisional administration consisting of two principals and a diocesan coordinator, the school became coeducational in 1968 with only one principal and no coordinator. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart assumed responsibility for the administration of Vandebilt Catholic High, and Brother Brice remained principal. Serving with him on the administrative team were Sister Edward Paul, SSND, vice principal and dean of women, and Mr. Steve Kenney, assistant principal and dean of men.

A faculty self-evaluation report at Vandebilt in 1969 stated that the school's students had earned a total of 28 individual and team trophies in debate and public speaking during the previous five years. During that same period, VCHS athletic teams won 13 district championships three in basketball, one in football, two in track, three in baseball, and four in golf. The school's motto was *"A School for Character in a School of Champions."* The curriculum was designed to be college-preparatory. The school day lasted from 8:20 a.m. until 3 p.m. with a 30-minute lunch period. Once a week students had an activity period.

Returning to Houma in 1970, Brother Gaspar Rodrigue replaced Brother Brice who was named principal of Brother Martin High School in New Orleans. The next year after serving as director general of the missions in Africa, Brother Alfred Kolb returned to Houma also. There he would teach at Vandebilt for the next 25 years. During Brother Gaspar's years as principal from 1970-75, art was added to the curriculum in 1972. In 1973 the English department introduced a program of 32 mini-courses, each lasting nine weeks. This program continued for two years. In recognition of his achievements as principal at Vandebilt and St. Francis, Brother Gaspar was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame in December 1995.

For three years, from 1975-78, Brother Matthias Amos served as principal. He was very popular with Vandebilt's teachers who appreciated his many visits to their classrooms and his efforts to help them improve their teaching skills. Following Brother Matthias as principal, Brother Ronald Talbot served two years from 1978-80. To improve the quality of education during the months of warm weather and high humidity, the school was air-conditioned in

1978. In 1979-80 Brother Ronald led the faculty in a thorough self-evaluation as part of the accreditation process for Vandebilt to become a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

In 1980 Brother Eldon Crifasi became principal at Vandebilt. His eight-year tenure as principal, the longest term of any principal at the school, brought a sense of stability and vision in spite of some dramatic changes touching the school's traditions. The last Marianite sister left the Vandebilt staff in 1982, ending more than 100 years of affiliation with St. Francis de Sales and Vandebilt. The following year was the last at Vandebilt for the very popular Coach Gerald Albert, longtime athletic director at the school. In 1982 his girls' softball team had set a national record with a 112-game winning streak. The next season Coach Albert was named National Softball Coach of the Year after his team won its fifth consecutive state title. Brother Eldon in his gentle, yet firm, manner of leadership guided the school calmly and steadily during the departure of the Marianites and Coach Albert.

Two new traditions took root during Brother Eldon's tenure. In 1983 a Christmas project to help the poor was begun at the suggestion and inspiration of a 1981 graduate, Miss Melanie LeCompte. Another tradition that Brother Eldon began was that of recognizing parents who had five or more children graduate from Vandebilt and St. Francis. Eighty-five couples were honored at the graduation ceremonies in 1987.

From 1988-92, during which time Brother John Abate was principal at Vandebilt, the enrollment grew from 590 to 777. In 1990 Vandebilt celebrated the 25th anniversary of its opening and the 120th anniversary of the founding of St. Francis de Sales Academy. In the spring of 1991, all former administrators, faculty, and religious were invited to a brunch and then to the school's graduation ceremonies. All former valedictorians and outstanding graduates were invited to the May honors convocation. One of the many things celebrated at these happy gatherings was the fact that in 1990, for the first time in the school's history, the Terriers were state champions in two sports the same year golf and softball.

Under Brother John's administration, a long-range plan called Strategy for Progress was developed. It included projections for enrollment, curriculum, staffing, facilities, and finances. A committee of volunteer parents headed by Mr. James Buquet was set up to seek funds for the improvement of school facilities. The first capital improvement since the school opened in 1965 involved the construction of a new library and three classrooms which Bishop Warren Boudreaux of the Houma-Thibodaux Diocese dedicated December 1, 1991. Other

improvements included renovation of the band hall facilities and the purchase of computers to add a computer literacy class to the school curriculum. The curriculum was further strengthened by hiring special personnel to work with students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Following Brother John's resignation for personal reasons in January 1992, Mr. David Keife, assistant principal, became acting principal for the spring semester. Brother Bernard Couvillion, provincial, announced that after 40 years of supplying brother principals in Houma, the province had no brother available to serve as principal. He was forced to ask the diocese to release the Brothers of the Sacred Heart from their agreement to provide a principal. He assured everyone, however, that the brothers would remain teaching at Vandebilt as long as possible. A selection committee consisting of VCHS school board members, two faculty members, and the diocesan superintendent was established to nominate a principal.

Vandebilt Catholic High School opened in 1992-93 with Mr. Alan Powers as its first lay principal. Parents continued to support the school faithfully, assuring its future. As well as academics, sports for both boys and girls remained important in this bayou school. The athletic program continued to flourish. In 1992 the school won state championships in golf and soccer, and in 1993 the girls' softball team won its ninth state championship.

Mr. David Keife, a longtime faculty member and assistant principal, accepted the position of principal in 1995. Five brothers remained in Houma for 1995-96: Brothers Matthias Amos, local director; Carl Evans, school chaplain and guidance counselor; Ray Kuhn, religion and science teacher; Remigius David, treasurer of the province patrimonial accounts; and Alfred Kolb, a legend at Vandebilt with over 50 years of teaching experience. Brother Alfred had served as principal of Vandebilt in the '50s and had taught religion and English there since 1971. Terrebonne Parish honored him in January 1992 with its Most Useful Citizen Award. Long before that Brother Alfred had won the love and reverence of the students and their parents at Vandebilt. One of his students, Jennifer Chehardy, wrote about him in a prizewinning essay published in the *Houma Courier* in May 1993: *"Since the first day of school Brother Alfred Kolb has conducted class in an enthusiastic and challenging manner. . . . I think the reason why Brother Alfred is such an inspiring person is that you don't have to search very hard to find Jesus in him."* A dedicated master teacher, Brother Alfred continues to personify the educational charism that the brothers hope to perpetuate at Vandebilt Catholic High School.

The brothers' residence at Vandebilt in Houma

CHAPTER 26

ST. STANISLAUS COLLEGE

Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

St. Stanislaus College, the oldest existing establishment of the brothers' in America, has a long and colorful history dating back to 1854. The brothers named their school in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, St. Stanislaus after the patron saint of youth and in recognition of the Rev. Stanislaus Buteux, pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Church. Father Stanislaus invited the brothers to Bay St. Louis and helped them purchase some beachfront property with the permission of Brother Polycarp Gondre, superior general. Chartered by the state legislature in 1870 as St. Stanislaus Commercial College, the brothers' school earned a solid reputation for quality education and character formation. St. Stanislaus received a diploma and medal of merit, the highest award given at the international scholastic exhibition in Paris in 1889. In 1893 at the Catholic Educational Exhibition in Chicago, Illinois, St. Stanislaus College made a superb showing.

A Century of Service recounts how the brothers in Bay St. Louis overcame the many trials and disasters of yellow fever epidemics, severe storms, a blockade during the Civil War, and a great fire in 1903 that leveled the school. The school was rebuilt, and the imposing three-story buildings dedicated in 1904 served the brothers and students extremely well until 1969 when Hurricane Camille damaged them beyond repair. The colonial-style structure of 1903 faced the bay and consisted of three 100-foot-long buildings, each crowned with a cupola and connected by covered walkways with 30-foot arches. The front had large windows to capitalize on the bay breezes while the back had a wide gallery its entire length.

St. Stanislaus College offered its students an advanced curriculum somewhat along the lines of today's junior colleges, granting college degrees until 1922. In keeping with its tradition of adaptation, St. Stanislaus responded to the increased demand for Catholic high schools following World War I and changed its curriculum in 1923 to become a college-preparatory high school. The school retained the name St. Stanislaus College, however, until 1995 when it was modified to St. Stanislaus College Prep. In 1932 the school was fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Under the outstanding leadership of Brother Peter Basso, president for 12 years from 1926-32 and 1938-44, the school developed a renowned band program and a strong athletic department that provided early development for a number of

national sports heroes, likely the most famous of whom was Heisman Trophy winner Mr. Felix "Doc" Blanchard of the U. S. Military Academy. Brother Peter's many public speeches and exhortations to the students firmly established the school's reputation as "The School of Character."

In 1946 Brother Peter returned to *his* school at "the Bay." He had so built up the school during his previous two terms that St. Stanislaus became known as "Brother Peter's School." The enrollment had climbed to 264 boarders and 176 day students, so he began plans for an expansion program, but the devastating hurricane of September 19, 1947, caused more than $60,000 damage to the school and sidetracked his plans.

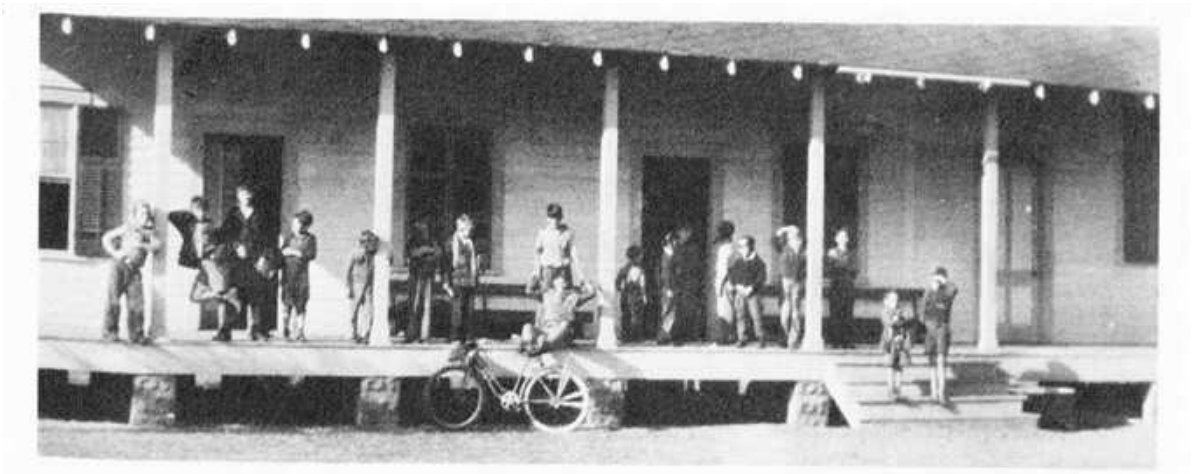
View from the double-decked pier built in 1948, looking toward the school that served from 1903 until Hurricane Camille damaged it beyond repair in 1969

People thought the disaster sapped his strength, but actually he was suffering stomach cancer which overtook him in 1948. After spending the summer in Touro Infirmary and undergoing four major operations, Brother Peter died in September. He did not live to see the impressive $50,000 pier completed that summer to replace the one demolished by the hurricane. The 1948 pier, extending 1,082 feet, started in the school yard and ascended 14 feet over the beach road and 20 feet above the water. Two roofed pavilions, a bathhouse with hot and cold running water, and a double platform at the end for swimming made the pier one of the finest in the area.

Brother Alexis Klee became president in 1948 and saw to the completion of the new dining hall on Bookter Street to replace the old damaged one. Designed just after the hurricane of 1947, the building had reinforced concrete foundations and a steel bulkhead to protect the storerooms in the basement. The new building, dedicated in 1950, included a dining hall to seat more than 200

students, a faculty dining room, and a well-equipped kitchen all built for a cost of $156,346.

In 1951 when Brother Celsus Craffey took over as president, he was hard pressed for teachers. He was forced to close St. Stanislaus Day School, commonly called "the back school," a one-story frame building where about 60 elementary grade students were taught tuition free. This free school, known as the Sorbonne when it opened in 1870, had served a real need in Bay St. Louis for 80 years, and the local people were eager for the brothers to reopen it, which they soon did. *"The St. Stanislaus Day School reopened on Thursday, September 4, 1952, with the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades."* (*The Rock-A-Chaw*, Vol. XXI, Sept. 22, 1952) Two or three brothers continued to teach annually in the back



The back school at the Bay as the 50-year graduates in 1996 remembered it

school until it closed permanently following Hurricane Camille in 1969. By then, Our Lady of the Gulf Elementary School was able to accommodate its students.

In 1954 St. Stanislaus celebrated its centennial. In preparation for the occasion, the chapel was renovated in 1953 and the sanctuary was repainted. On October 9, 1954, the people of Bay St. Louis paid tribute to the brothers at a civic reception. The next morning, many dignitaries and alumni attended a pontifical high Mass celebrated by Bishop Richard Gerow of Natchez at Our Lady of the Gulf Church. Mass was followed by an excellent banquet prepared by Brother Cyrus Harrington in the school dining hall. On October 11, a solemn high requiem Mass was offered in the school chapel for all deceased faculty members and alumni of St. Stanislaus. Student brothers from the Spring Hill provided the music.

Also in 1954 school officials launched a Centennial Memorial Drive to raise $300,000 for a new infirmary and brothers' residence with 20 private rooms. Five years later after the drive had failed to raise necessary funds, the

province paid 75 percent of the $200,000 construction cost for a more modest design, a three-story concrete and aluminum structure with exterior walls of mosaic panels in pastel colors. The building, constructed on the site of the former dining room, was dedicated in October 1959. The top floor contained 14 bedrooms with semiprivate baths for the brothers. The bottom floor included three classrooms as well as workrooms for *The White Cap* and *The Rock-A-Chaw,* the school yearbook and newspaper. A dispensary with two large sick wards, a treatment room, and nurses' quarters took up most of the second floor. This building was called the infirmary until 1995 when it was officially named Centennial Hall.

Other facilities were old and worn. The main buildings dated from 1904. The gym had been built in 1924 even though new shower facilities were added in 1953 at a cost of $70,000. The chapel building with its large study hall, science labs, and 17 private rooms for the brothers had been constructed in 1929. All of the buildings were structurally sound, safe, and still serviceable. In spite of the old facilities, school spirit among the Rock-A-Chaws remained as high as ever. As one brother put it, *"Saint Stanislaus is not a school, but a way of life."* (*Province Monthly,* November-December 1959, p. 3)

Young boys sleeping in *"Peanut Heaven,"* one of Brother Ephrem Falgoust's *"little dorms"* with 42 beds, were happy just to be a part of the St. Stanislaus family. They were too tired at the end of the day to notice the mosquitoes at night, much less the worn buildings. They were too busy during the day to be concerned about problems of presidents and provincials. Their contacts with Brothers Firmin Brashear, treasurer, to get money to buy a candy bar and soft drink from Brother Luke Tressel, who helped in the canteen, were far more important. As long as Brother Alban Tucker served square meals in the dining room, they were generally quite happy during the week. Most boarders went home for the weekends.

With its ideal location on the shores of the Bay of St. Louis, St. Stanislaus put its facilities to good use in the summer by providing young boys relief from summer boredom with a well-supervised outlet for their energies. In 1957 Brother Philip Lewis directed the 30th annual summer camp session for boys eight to 14 years old. It was billed as a five-week session of fun and character formation. The widespread popularity of Camp Stanislaus dated back to 1928 when Brother Peter promoted the idea and personally directed the camp, setting its high standards which made it one of the most sought-after camps in the South.

St. Stanislaus College campus consists of a sprawling 25 acres. Nine acres on the north side of the railroad tracks are enclosed by a cinder-block wall around a football field, baseball diamond, and track. Other playing fields, as well as basketball and tennis courts much closer to the school building, are used for physical education classes and after-school recreation by resident students. To provide more playing area, the brothers carefully removed the graves from the brothers' cemetery in the summer of 1954 and placed them in a new and larger cemetery just across Hancock Street.

During Brother Roland's tenure as president from 1953-59, the boarding department reached a high of 259 boys in 1955. A third brother, Brother Noel Lemmon, was assigned to prefect and was put in charge of a middle division. Brother Leo Godin continued in charge of the 120 older boys in the large study hall; and Brother Ephrem Falgoust, who prefected at the Bay for 29 years, continued with the younger boys in the small study hall. There were 28 brothers and two lay teachers at St. Stanislaus in 1955 to cover the 16 classes of 502 boys in Grades 4-12. According to Brother Martin Hernandez's provincial reports, the brothers were overworked and burdened with many extra duties. Prefecting, coaching, and moderating the many school activities, which included band, confraternities, debate, drama, newspaper, yearbook, and various service projects, made it difficult for brothers teaching full loads to find sufficient time to prepare classes and correct papers. Even though the brothers were happy, Brother Martin feared that the academic quality of St. Stanislaus was in danger of slipping and that the school would be carried by its past reputation. (Provincial's Report, March 1959)

Brother Hugh Ponthieux began a six-year term as president-director of St. Stanislaus in 1959. He was a solidly religious man, highly respected by the brothers but sometimes viewed by the school's patrons as cold and difficult to understand. Brother Hugh found the public relations duties of the president demanding and distasteful, but he realized their importance. As a boarding school, SSC attracted students from more than 10 states and as many foreign countries. In 1963 the school consisted of 247 boarders, 103 in elementary classes and 144 in high school. In addition, there were 151 day students, 70 elementary and 81 secondary.

As principal from 1962-65, Brother Flavian Udinsky modernized methods of scheduling classes and grading, making use of data processing to handle report cards. Students were given an unstructured period during a seven-period day to provide them with time to study or relax. Brother Flavian also introduced the *Alpha* and *Beta* honor rolls to emphasize the importance of academic excellence.

In 1965 Brother Roland returned as president with Brother Lee Barker as principal. They continued to improve the school's academic program and began to modernize the school facilities. After the National Aeronautics Space Administration located its test facilities just 17 miles from Bay St. Louis, the area began to develop economically. The population grew, especially in nearby Waveland, home of many of St. Stanislaus's day students. In the same spirit of progress, St. Stanislaus developed a $3.5 million 10-year progression program that included plans for a new and modern dormitory, an administration building, a classroom wing, and a separate faculty residence for the brothers. In 1966 Brother Celestine Algero was named coordinator of the development program and worked with a professional fund-raising company out of New York. He began visiting alumni and friends, seeking financial support for the improvements.

Brother Philip Lewis was named director of resident students in order to free Brother Roland, president, to supervise the construction of the dormitory building scheduled for completion by the 1966-67 school year. The new $800,000 dormitory was designed to house 300 boys in 90 rooms with three or four to a room. Each room had its own toilet and shower facilities as well as sufficient beds, desks, and wardrobes. The building was totally air-conditioned, and hallways were carpeted. This student resident center consisted of two three-story wings connected on each floor by adjoining hallways wide enough for small classrooms. At the dedication in November 1966, the dormitory was named Aurelian Hall in memory of Brother Aurelian Piton who spent 65 years at St. Stanislaus. (Cf p. 82 for a photo of Aurelian Hall)

Brother Pierre St. Pierre was named president of St. Stanislaus in June of 1969. On August 17, shortly before school started, the eye of Hurricane Camille, the worst storm ever to hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast, passed directly over Bay St. Louis. With winds measuring in excess of 200 miles per hour and a 35-foot tidal surge, it wreaked more than $1 million worth of damage at St. Stanislaus. The beautiful pier was demolished. The school building of 1904 was badly damaged by wind and water, but the new dormitory building escaped with little harm. Fortunately none of the brothers or the 200 refugees taking shelter in the school buildings were hurt. President Richard Nixon declared the damaged coast a federal disaster area, and martial law dictated a dusk-to-dawn curfew. Brothers and volunteers, aided by national guardsmen and army personnel, worked around the clock. St. Stanislaus College opened for classes only two weeks late.

Aerial view of St. Stanislaus in 1970. Ascending from the bottom right along Bookter Street are the new swimming pool, the juniorate building, the old laundry, the dining room, the infirmary building, and the chapel building. Along Beach Boulevard facing the beach are the old, damaged school buildings. On the left, descending along Union Street, are the old gym and Aurelian Hall.

On November 1, 1969, Brother Pierre, president, presented the provincial council a long-range building plan for the school. Rather than trying to repair the damaged school building, the provincial council decided to build a new one. It would actually be cheaper since the old building had suffered some structural damage. Besides, it was an opportunity to modernize St. Stanislaus with a first-class educational facility.

Replacement cost of the magnificent two-story pier was estimated at $117,995. Since it was insured for only $30,000, the brothers replaced it with a simpler one in time for summer camp in 1970. In July 1970, the school sold 20 acres of unused land on the west side of Old Spanish Trail for $30,000. This

helped finance an olympic-size swimming pool constructed that year on the back part of the main campus. Brother Albert Ledet began a 25-year career as swimming coach and life-safety instructor for the school and camp. Also, in his free time, he opened the pool to the children in the Bay St. Louis area and gave them swimming lessons.

In August of 1971 the new two-story modern school building to accommodate 600 students was completed at a cost of $1.6 million. In addition to regular classrooms, the second floor included a large audio-visual resource center, named the Brother Alexis Memorial Resource Center, as well as various laboratories for sciences, languages, reading, and art. The first floor accommodated administration offices and a large student union with several recreation rooms for resident students.

Two other major projects during Brother Pierre's administration as president were renovating the old library and converting the juniorate building into a band hall. The new Kleinpeter-Gibbens Memorial Library was dedicated in May of 1970. In 1974 the renovated band hall was named in memory of Brother Romuald Robitaille who died in New York in 1972. For 25 years Brother Romuald's bands brought state and national acclaim to St. Stanislaus. Also in 1974 the school paid $10,000 to double the size of its Bookter Street property across from the chapel building to provide a practice field for the band and an additional play area.

The Brother Peter Memorial Gymnasium and Physical Education Center

Under the administration of Brother Hubert Bonnette, who was named president in 1975, the building program continued. In 1977 the Brother Peter Memorial Gymnasium and Physical Education Center facing Hancock Street was completed at a cost of over $600,000. With a seating capacity of 1,300, it provided facilities for interscholastic sports as well as physical education classes. The multipurpose building served also for school Masses, student assemblies, and drama productions. In 1979 under the direction of Brother Bennet Bishop,

president of the American Drug Free Powerlifting Association, SSC hosted the national powerlifting competition in its new gym. The event, televised by the National Broadcasting Company, involved 96 lifters from 26 states.

In 1976 Brother Lee Barker, principal at St. Stanislaus for the previous 10 years, was elected provincial. By then, St. Stanislaus had been built into a first-class educational facility with an excellent reputation. The school was filled to capacity with 325 day students and 300 boarders in Grades 6-12, making it the largest Catholic boys' boarding school in the country. It had a solid faculty and a strong educational program. One-third of its students were non-Catholic, but a thoroughly Catholic religious atmosphere prevailed and was enhanced by the presence of several priests from the nearby seminary. Twenty-five percent of the graduating class at St. Stanislaus in 1976 received academic, athletic, or music scholarships to universities in Mississippi and throughout the country. Brother Lee was fittingly placed in the SSC Hall of Fame in 1989 in recognition of his outstanding work.

Brother Paul Montero served only one year, 1976-77, as principal before he was called upon to be novice master, and then Brother Eldon Crifasi served three years as principal. In 1978 Brother Mark Thornton succeeded Brother Hubert as president. The following year, St. Stanislaus celebrated its 125th anniversary. For the occasion, Brother Aquin Gauthier, development director, published a brief illustrated history of the school in an 8½ by 11 format. In it he stated: *"The work of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is chiefly in the field of education, and for the past 125 years, the brothers at St. Stanislaus have trained over 10,000 students in the principles of Christian doctrine and education. These young men leaving St. Stanislaus have taken their place in the world as true men of character."* It was through Brother Aquin's untiring efforts in working with the alumni and friends of St. Stanislaus as development director that much of the cost for the 10-year progression program was covered. He held the development director position for more than 20 years.

In 1981 the kitchen was modernized and doubled in size; and the dining hall was completely refurbished and dedicated to Brother Alban Tucker, who served as dietitian and master cook at the Bay for 24 years. Brother Alban had died in January of 1979, and Brother Pierre took over as director of food services later that year. He managed a staff of more than 20 employees, serving over 1,200 meals daily to students, faculty, and brothers. Until his retirement from the kitchen in 1996, Brother Pierre continued three times a day to prepare tasty meals that even the students admitted they liked.

During Brother Mark's term as president, Brother Paul Mulligan served as principal from 1980-84 and then Brother Celestine Algero in 1984-85. During this period, the provincial council changed the administrative structures at St. Stanislaus, separating the brothers' house council from the school board. Up until this time the two had been the same, headed by the president of St. Stanislaus who served also as religious superior for the brothers. In 1985 the provincial council, instead of naming a president-director and a principal for St. Stanislaus, named a religious superior for the local community of brothers and one chief administrator for the school. Brother Albert Ledet was named local director and Brother Celestine was named chief administrator, or president, of the school. The local board was given the responsibility of naming its principal, and it renamed Brother Celestine to the position. Thus, he served as both president and principal for 1985-86. The chart below shows that only he and Brother Paul Montero, who succeeded him in 1986, served in the dual capacity of president and principal of St. Stanislaus.

PRESIDENTS AND PRINCIPALS OF SSC
1946 – 1996

	PRESIDENTS		PRINCIPALS
1946	Peter Basso	1946	Linus Meyers
1948	Alexis Klee		
		1949	Gerard Gilbert
		1950	Gerald Coridan
1951	Celsus Craffey	1951	William Sharkey
		1952	Roland Smith
		1953	Felician Fourrier
1953	Roland Smith	1953	Ashton Brisolara
		1954	Linus Meyers
		1958	Philip Lewis
1959	Hugh Ponthieux		
		1961	Dacian LeBlanc
		1962	Flavian Udinsky
1965	Roland Smith	1965	Lee Barker
1969	Pierre St. Pierre		
1975	Hubert Bonnette		
		1976	Paul Montero
		1977	Eldon Crifasi
1978	Mark Thornton		
		1980	Paul Mulligan
		1984	Celestine Algero
1985	Celestin Algero		
1986	Paul Montero	1986	Paul Montero
		1991	* Dr. Michael Ryan
1994	Donnan Berry		
		1996	Ronald Talbot

* Only layman to serve; all others, Brothers of the Sacred Heart

Brother Albert continued as religious superior of the 34 brothers at St. Stanislaus. Because of the number of brothers and the diversity of needs, the job of the local superior became full-time. The local community consisted of a number of brothers who were sick or infirm; some who were retired or semi-retired; brothers who worked in the school as administrators, teachers, or support personnel; and five brothers who worked in the dormitory as prefects.

For many years the same prefects, Brothers Joseph Donovan, Paul Mulligan, Eduardo Baldioceda, Raymond Sylve, and Neri Falgout, had been assigned to work in the dormitory. They were experienced and quite capable, but some of them were tiring. With the number of brothers dwindling, there were few replacements in sight. Even assistant prefects were hard to find among the brothers. It had been the custom for the provincial to name prefects, but in 1987 Brother Xavier Werneth, provincial, informed the school administration that the local school board would have to *"take more responsibility for the future planning of SSC, especially in regard to collaboration with the laity and the real need to begin training lay prefects."* (Provincial Council Minutes, April 4, 1987) Rather than decrease the total number of resident students to lighten the load of the five brother prefects, as the SSC board proposed in its budget, the provincial council determined that to fulfill the school's mission it would be preferable to train qualified laymen to assist them.

Brother Paul Montero, president-principal, met with the provincial council in April of 1987 to discuss the future of the residency department at St. Stanislaus. He requested that the council meet with the newly developing school board. On May 7, the provincial council met with the brothers' board of directors at St. Stanislaus to discuss the future of the school. The council urged a greater collaboration with lay people in order that the important ministry of the residency department continue on a large scale basis. The school administration then began hiring additional lay assistant prefects to take some of the strain off the brothers. When Brother Lee Barker returned to St. Stanislaus in 1988 as director of the residency department, he recruited and trained lay assistant prefects.

In 1990 the SSC board of directors approved a $675,000 addition to the school providing six classrooms, two computer labs, and a guidance complex. Money came from a major fund-raising campaign, plus $200,000 in interest from the school's endowment fund. The addition, located directly in front of the existing school building, extended 45 feet beyond it, but on the second floor only. The new construction rested on columns, leaving the ground-level open for a driveway and a covered entrance to the school. At first a site on the north side of the school building was proposed, but following a furor of protest that attracted

television news coverage, plans were changed to avoid destroying two large 85-year-old oak trees. The new building was dedicated November 3, 1991.

Front view of St. Stanislaus after the 1991 addition

In 1991 the St. Stanislaus board of directors named its first lay principal, Dr. Michael Ryan. A 1968 graduate of SSC, he had been on the faculty for 10 years and had served as assistant principal. Brother Joseph Donovan returned to the role of dean of students, replacing Brother Noel Lemmon who had served in that position from 1986-91. Brother Paul continued in his role as president. Under his direction the school's mission statement was modified to read: *"The specific charism of St. Stanislaus is to work not only with the highly motivated, self-directed students but also with the troubled, unmotivated, undisciplined student in a structured atmosphere of love, patience, and consistent discipline where forgiveness and a willingness to continue working with difficult students is evident."* In keeping with its mission statement, the administration hired a full-time school psychologist to help troubled students. It also established a Spiritual Life Development Team to enhance the religious atmosphere of the school. A group of nine teachers led by Brother Robert LeBlanc revised a resource booklet on classroom prayer to help teachers pray daily with the students.

For its 140th anniversary in 1994, SSC constructed the Diboll Heritage Plaza in the back of the school under the shade of several large oak trees that grace the campus. The plaza was named in memory of Mr. Collins Diboll, architect of the 1903 building. Also the school initiated an archaeological dig, called the Sesqui Project, which will continue until the 150th anniversary in the year 2004. The excavation was started by 100 seniors in April of 1994 on the site of the old back school. On April 22, the 140th anniversary festivities culminated with a liturgy celebrated by the Rev. James Carter, SJ, a 1944 St.

Stanislaus graduate and president of Loyola University of the South in New Orleans.

A program printed for the 1994 anniversary celebration, presided over by Bishop Joseph Howze of the Biloxi Diocese, listed the names of the 28 brothers stationed at St. Stanislaus during its 140th year and their years of service at the school. More than half counted over 20 years at the Bay an unmatched province record for longevity. Brothers Firmin Brashear, Loyola Mattingly, and Philip Lewis led the list with over 40 years each. Eight brothers were in the 30-year-plus category: Brothers Albert Ledet, Aubert Rebman, Canisius Schell, Eduardo Baldioceda, Joseph Donovan, Leon Stock, Noel Lemmon, and Roy Reinecke. Five other brothers served for over 20 years: Brothers Lee Barker, Neri Falgout, Pascal Ackerman, Pierre St. Pierre, and Raymond Sylve.

Some of these brothers, retired and semi-retired, still found ways to minister effectively. Brother Canisius, for example, reached out to the wider community and taught Stanislaus students how to help the elderly at Hotel Reed and the disadvantaged at the Bay-Waveland Headstart Center. His "Project Lizzie" had girls from nearby Our Lady Academy working with a young autistic child. For years after his retirement, Brother Pascal taught tennis to young and old alike. Brother Philip dedicated many hours of each day to working at the stadium, where back in 1968 as moderator of the Sidelines Club he had seen to the construction of a field house. Brother Loyola cared daily for the school grounds and the pecan grove. Brother Leon put his carpentry skills to work on a variety of projects for the school and community.

Many dedicated lay persons have worked with these brothers to contribute to the success of St. Stanislaus during the last 50 years. Past employees with more than 25 years of service at Stanislaus since 1947 include Dr. Marion Wolfe; Messrs. Mose Singleton and Ralph Lanaux; and Mmes. Eoline Holmes, Anette Holmes, Hilda Fayard, Gaynell Acker, and Iris Morel. Present lay employees with more than 25 years at SSC are Mr. James Triffiley, dean of the faculty, and Mmes. Beverly Zimmerman, Mary McCarthy, and Aline Beal.

Brother Donnan Berry began his first year at SSC in 1993 when he replaced Brother Marcel Riviere as local director. Brother Marcel, who had served since 1988, accomplished much during his five years. He led the brothers in setting up small-group weekly reflection sessions to discuss their lives and to share their faith experiences. A major issue facing the community was that of remodeling the large chapel. After several years of patient discussion and communal discernment under Brother Marcel's leadership, the house council

decided to convert two classrooms on the bottom floor of the infirmary building into a small chapel for the brothers' use. Thanks to the artistic and carpentry skills of Brothers Leon, John Hotstream, and others, the results were quite gratifying. Sacred Heart Chapel was dedicated on Foundation Day, 1992.

In the summer of 1994, Camp Stanislaus celebrated its 25th year since it reopened in 1969 with 60 boys. The summer camp had been closed from 1963-68 to allow brothers to attend summer school. The program was revised to include classroom work in math, English, reading, and computers. As camp director, Brother Noel Lemmon organized activities around a core group of brothers such as Brothers Ramon Daunis, Raymond Sylve, Paul Mulligan, and Neri Falgout. Besides these brothers who taught skiing and drove the boats, other brothers such as Brothers Lee Barker, Albert Ledet, Leon Stock, Eduardo Baldioceda, Bosco Faget, Joseph Donovan, and Pierre St. Pierre helped out by driving buses, teaching rifles and swimming, repairing equipment, and preparing meals. With these brothers and others, Brother Noel built attendance up to more than 170 campers. He employed about 70 college students and high school seniors to work as camp counselors and he trained them to model the school's values. In 1974 Brother Noel augmented the camp's facilities by adding a ski lodge on the Jourdan River. Summer camp, many a boarder's first experience of St. Stanislaus, has helped with recruitment, and its financial success has been a real asset. Brother Noel, camp director for 27 years, was inducted into the SSC Hall of Fame in 1996 in recognition of his powerful influence on youth.

When Brother Paul Montero became provincial superior in August 1994, Brother Donnan Berry replaced him as president at St. Stanislaus. Brother Xavier Werneth took Brother Donnan's place as local director in December. When Brother Lee Barker was transferred to New Orleans in 1994, Father Paul Calamari assumed responsibility of the residency department which employed 12 laymen three prefects and nine assistants to work with three brothers in the department: Brothers Joseph Donovan, Eduardo Baldioceda, and Chris Sweeney. Of the 26 brothers at St. Stanislaus in 1994-95, 12 were actively involved in the school full-time and six on a part-time basis. The complete faculty and staff included 113 lay men and women.

Bringing the brothers and lay faculty together to develop more fully the faith dimension of St. Stanislaus, the campus ministry department, directed by Brother Adrian Gaudin, sponsored a series of six "Sharing the Faith" sessions during the 1995-96 school year. For the 1996-97 school year, Brother Donnan, president, and Brother Ronald Talbot, newly appointed principal, set out to lead the faculty and staff to carry forward the 142-year-old tradition of education and formation of youth at St. Stanislaus, "The School of Character."

CHAPTER 27

D'EVEREUX HALL

Natchez, Mississippi

In August of 1854, Bishop Jacques Van de Velde, SJ, of Natchez, Mississippi, visited Bay St. Louis where he met several Brothers of the Sacred Heart and Father Stanislaus Buteux, the pastor at Our Lady of the Gulf. The bishop was so impressed by the brothers that he wrote in French to Brother Polycarp Gondre, superior general, asking for three brothers right away to teach in Natchez and some later for Vicksburg. *"I prefer your brothers to all others,"* he insisted. Bishop Van de Velde died the following year, and it was not until 11 years later, on November 1, 1865, that three Brothers of the Sacred Heart went to Natchez to conduct the Cathedral School.

In the same contract by which the brothers took charge of the school, they agreed to manage an orphan home for boys. Bishop William Elder of Natchez started the orphanage when William St. John Elliot, a wealthy Catholic, left in his will provisions for the diocese to open a male orphanage to be incorporated under the name D'Evereux Hall Orphan Asylum. The diocese opened the orphanage in 1860 in a small frame building on a plot of land consisting of 35 acres on Aldrich and Pine streets in Natchez. The little orphanage which could accommodate only 12 small boys was administered by the Rev. Frederick Muller, a diocesan priest, but Bishop Elder wanted a religious congregation of men to manage it.

On December 15, 1865, three more brothers arrived in Natchez to direct D'Evereux Hall. The bishop began immediately to construct a larger brick building which was completed the following year and was filled right away with 41 orphans. Additions to the building were made in 1879 and 1910 to increase the capacity of the orphanage since yellow fever epidemics had orphaned many children in the area. The 1910 building put up by Bishop Thomas Heslin provided more spacious living accommodations for the brothers whose number at the orphanage had increased to 10. D'Evereux Hall on the highest hill in Natchez made an impressive sight.

In 1938 Bishop Richard Gerow took a personal interest in the orphans' welfare and determined to make D'Evereux Hall one of the finest charitable institutions in the state. He spent $30,000 to renovate the buildings. By then the only brothers in Natchez were seven who remained at the orphanage after the brothers had withdrawn from Cathedral School in 1935 when the boys' and girls'

schools, both very small, merged into one larger school under the direction of the Sisters of Charity.

In 1947 Brother Basil Harrington replaced Brother Lambert Fairfield as director of the orphanage. The seven brothers there worked with about 50 orphans each year. They ranged in age from six to 17, but most of them were still in the elementary grades. They attended classes at either the orphanage or the Cathedral Elementary School. In 1949 Brother Florian McGinnis, who had already managed the orphanage for a six-year term, returned as director. He had been an orphan himself at Boys' Industrial Home in Mobile, and he always showed a great love for and understanding of the orphans even if his ways were considered old-fashioned.

At least seven brothers had been assigned annually to D'Evereux Hall since 1878. But in 1950, Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, changed that. Pressed for manpower because the previous year seven professed brothers had left and another had died, and not wishing to withdraw student brothers from the newly opened scholasticate and interrupt their studies, Brother Martin cut the staff at D'Evereux Hall from seven to five in 1950-51, to four in 1951-52, and to three in 1952-53. But by 1952, the enrollment at D'Evereux Hall had dropped to 35 boys and the brothers had discontinued teaching classes on the campus. Working with Brother Florian in 195253 were Brothers Ephrem Falgoust, who prefected the boys, and Henry Moulin, who was old and infirm.

In 1953 Brother Edgar Gagnon, who was 50 years old, succeeded Brother Florian as director. It was a tough year for the three brothers in Natchez due to age differences. Brother Joel Deimantas, 30 years old, had replaced Brother Ephrem as prefect. Brother Henry, who would spend a total of 36 years among the orphans at Natchez, was already in his seventies. He had worked as infirmarian, farmer, prefect, florist, and handyman; and he was highly esteemed for his patient understanding of the boys. After Brother Martin made his provincial visitation to D'Evereux Hall in 1954, he wrote to the superior general: *"For a house of only three brothers, things are as good as can be expected. If this were not an orphanage, I would advise withdrawing from Natchez. Boys of 5 years of age are accepted and these are too young for the brothers to look after."* (Provincial Report, February 18, 1954) The following year's report showed that there were only three boys older than 13, and all the others were very young, 10 of them only six years old.

Brother Edgar served six years and provided very well for the orphans under his care. He saw to the installation of a new heating system in the dormitory and acquired new playground equipment. An article concerning the

brothers' work at D'Evereux Hall appeared in the *Vicksburg Herald*, September 18, 1954. It stated: *"Too much praise cannot be given to these noble men, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, for the splendid work they have accomplished since taking charge of the orphanage. Practically 1,500 of Mississippi's homeless boys found a home there. One hundred and ninety-three boys from Warren County received their training at D'Evereux Hall since it was established. At present there are 12 boys from Warren County at the orphanage. All of these received and still receive the best of moral and educational training and have proved themselves valuable citizens of our state."*

Brother Aquinas Vanderhoeven began a six-year term as director in 1959. He enjoyed excellent rapport with the clergy, some of whom had been alienated by Brother Edgar's crude manners and sometimes vulgar speech. Joining Brothers Aquinas and Henry was Brother Pierre St. Pierre, who prepared meals and took care of the small boys who needed constant watching. It was a happy and cheerful community. The brothers had an opportunity to assist at a second Mass during the day while the 28 boys attended classes at the new Cathedral Grammar School just a short distance from their house. Also the brothers had time to putter in the garden and look after the chickens and the three milk cows.

On December 12, 1960, 50 brothers gathered in Natchez to celebrate the centennial of D'Evereux Hall. Bishop Richard Gerow of Natchez-Jackson celebrated a solemn pontifical Mass for the occasion. Following Mass there was a banquet at the Eola Hotel. Bishop Gerow and Monsignor Thomas Fullam, diocesan director of Catholic Charities, had high praise for the work of the brothers.

Back and side view of D'Evereux Hall Orphanage in the early '60s

Brother Pascal Ackerman, province tailor, joined the community in Natchez in 1960. In 1962 Brother Alban Tucker replaced Brother Pierre. At that time the number of boys had decreased to only 23. Ample playground facilities such as swings, bikes, and slides suitable to young boys kept them occupied during recesses. Even though hired help did most of the cleaning, each boy was given chores around the house to teach him responsibility. They kept the old house spotlessly clean. The brothers maintained a family atmosphere and trained the boys in politeness, charity, and piety.

By the early '60s, it was apparent that new directions in child-care programs were under discussion by diocesan officials. In 1965 when Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, visited the orphanage, he was struck by the young age of the boys. As did Brother Martin before him, Brother Hubert concluded, *"Brothers should not take care of this age group."* (Provincial's Report, 1965) On March 4, 1965, the provincial council agreed that Brother Hubert should speak to Bishop Gerow and his auxiliary, Bishop Joseph Brunini, a "brothers' boy" from St. Aloysius in Vicksburg, about withdrawing the brothers from D'Evereux Hall in Natchez. Both bishops served on the board of trustees for D'Evereux Hall and for St. Mary's Orphanage for girls. The board had decided to follow the new directions in child-care ministry and adopted an *"expanded child-care program."* The new program aimed at providing a more homelike atmosphere whereby groups of one to three children were taken in by foster parents and groups of six to eight orphans were placed in group-care homes. (*Province Monthly*, March-April, 1966, p. 1)

At its meeting on April 4, 1965, the provincial council, with the full agreement of the bishops, unanimously decided that the brothers would withdraw from the orphanage in the summer of 1966. Thus, when Brother Dacian LeBlanc took over direction of D'Evereux Hall in September 1965, he knew it was the orphanage's last year and a period of transition.

The brothers had operated the orphanage in Natchez for more than 100 years since their arrival there in 1865. They had worked with more than 1,500 orphans at the school. To this day, the brothers maintain happy memories of their work at D'Evereux Hall. An article about Natchez in *Brothers of the Sacred Heart* quoted Brother Pierre St. Pierre as looking back on his days in Natchez as *"the happiest days of my life."* The same article quoted Brother Pascal, who lived at D'Evereux Hall as an orphan from 1918-24 and who later served there for five years as a brother, as having *"cherished memories of both times."* (Vol. 5:2, October 1985, p. 5)

CHAPTER 28

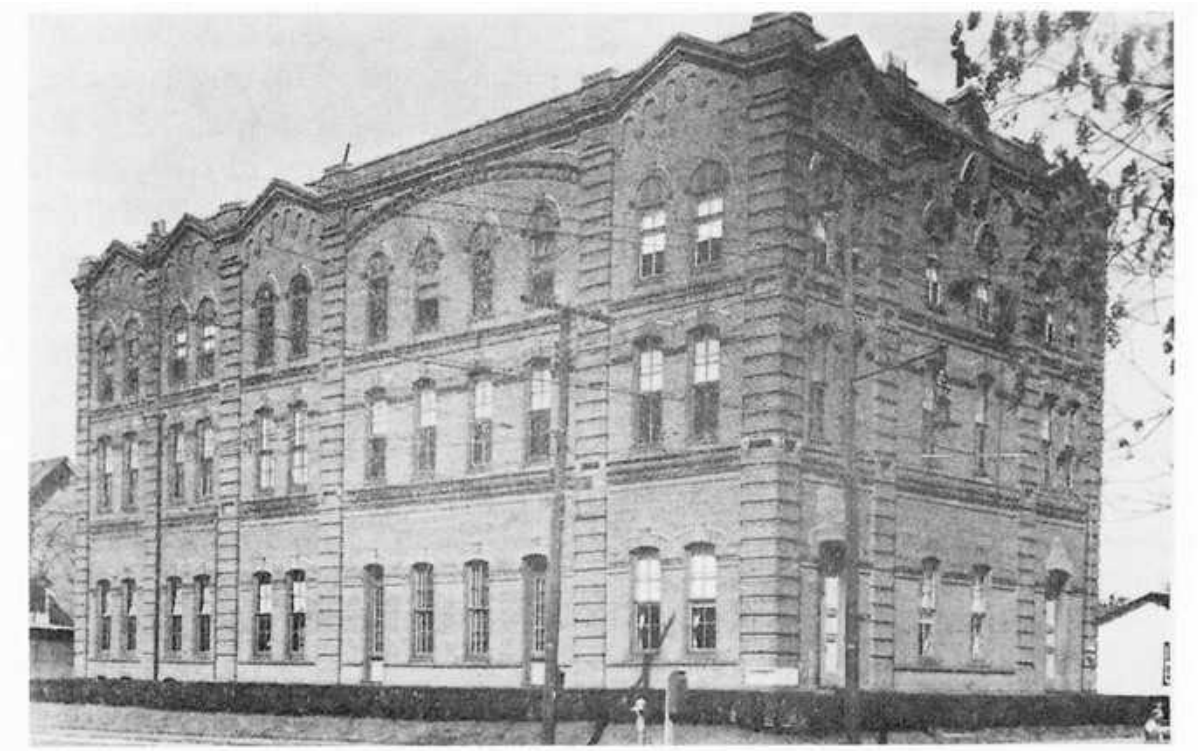
ST. ALOYSIUS COLLEGE

Vicksburg, Mississippi

When St. Aloysius in Vicksburg opened in 1879, three brothers taught 50 boys a high school curriculum with an emphasis on commercial subjects. The Rev. J. H. McManus, pastor of St. Paul's Parish, had constructed the large three-story school on the corner of North and Grove streets the previous year. The brothers lived on the top floor of the school and used the two lower floors for classes. As the brothers welcomed students of all faiths, enrollment increased rapidly. In 1881 the Mississippi legislature chartered St. Aloysius to grant college degrees, but later the school restricted itself to Grades 1-12. Under Brother Charles Roach, principal from 1889-95, the school grew to 300 students taught by a faculty of eight brothers. Brother Charles shaped St. Aloysius College into an outstanding educational institution and stamped it with an intellectual spirit that lasted over the years.

Led by Brother Berchmans Roy from 1905-11, St. Aloysius became even more prestigious. In 1908 the Brothers of the Sacred Heart helped the parish finance a 40-foot addition to all three stories of the school in order to take in more pupils and provide living space for 10 brothers. The school's tradition for excellence in education was enhanced by subsequent principals such as Brothers Macarius Pierce, Lambert Fairfield, Theodorus Meynier, Bonaventure Kenny, and Gerald Coridan. These men maintained a strict discipline and demanded diligent work from the students.

Brother Ignatius Anderson returned to St. Aloysius as principal-director in 1945. During his previous six-year term from 1936-42, he had proved himself to be a progressive administrator. He built up the school's extracurricular programs, giving special emphasis to the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, the band, sports, and journalism. He started the school's newspaper, *The Golden Quill*, subsequent winner of many state and national awards. In 1936 he hired Mr. Joseph Balzli, who directed St. Al's athletic program very successfully for 25 years. Coach Balzli's football teams went undefeated for five seasons, won three Class-A state championships, and three bowl titles. His Flashes boasted a 73-percent winning record, earning him the title "Father of St. Aloysius Football."



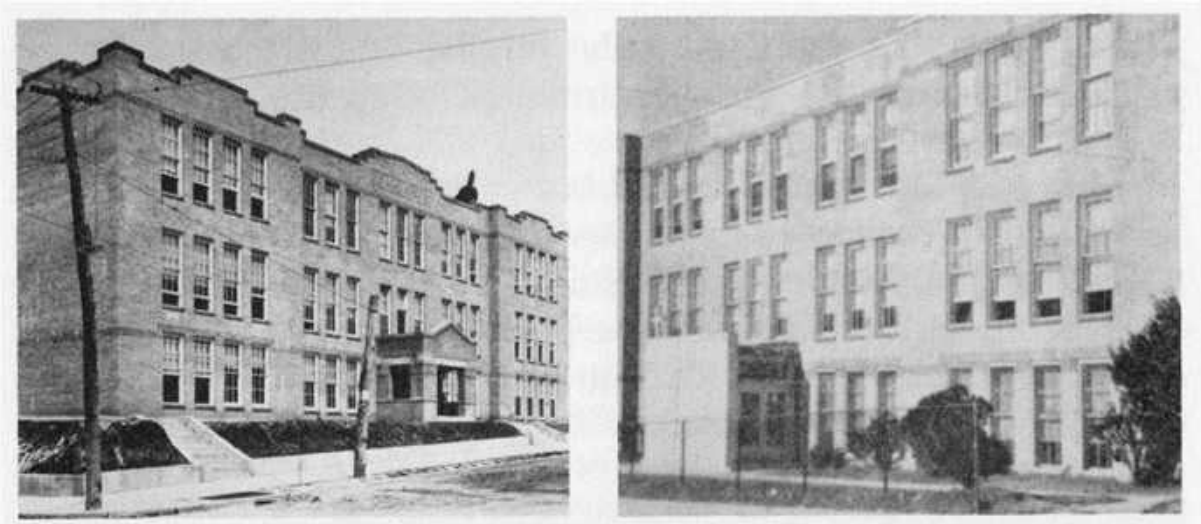
St. Aloysius on North and Grove streets where the brothers taught until 1948

When Brother Gerard Gilbert replaced Brother Ignatius as principal in 1947, the *"brothers' school,"* as the people referred to it, was in poor physical condition. The pastor of St. Paul's, Monsignor D. J. O'Beirne, wanted to build a new St. Aloysius, but, as he wrote his parishioners on July 14, 1947, this dream was entirely out of reach financially. City officials, however, had approached the pastor several years earlier, when Brother William Sharkey was principal in 1944, with a proposal to exchange an old public school building for some church property. When the pastor consulted Brother William about the possibility, Brother William quipped, *"It is too good to be true. If I had this school, I could go places."* Brother Ignatius, past principal, also wholeheartedly supported the transfer of properties as a splendid bargain for St. Aloysius.

In a letter to his parishioners explaining the proposal, Monsignor O'Beirne wrote, *"Unless this program is adopted, I have no solution for a proper continuance of the Brothers' School."* It is interesting to note that even the pastor referred to St. Aloysius as *"the Brothers' School."* The pastor concluded: *"We shall be in a position finally, through your continued generosity, to construct an appropriate residence for the brothers, where they can be given proper living quarters, comfortable and commodious."* (St. Paul's Parish Newsletter, July 14, 1947) Thus, in 1947 St. Paul's Parish traded its property on Grove, First North, and Jackson streets and paid $3,000 in return for a 35-year-old public elementary school on Clay Street and Johnson Memorial Field.

On August 7, 1947, Brother Gilbert Reuter, provincial, and Msgr. O'Beirne renewed the contract between the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and St. Paul's Church. It specified that the brothers would teach and conduct the school *"according to their own methods and rules and will submit a copy of their Rule Book to the Pastor."* The brothers received a yearly salary of $900 each, and all tuitions collected went to the pastor. As was common at the time, the contract stipulated that the brothers *"will not solicit, for any purpose, monies from individuals, corporations, or institutions within the limits of the Parish of St. Paul's without the express permission, given in writing, of the Pastor."* The parish provided lodging for the brothers and paid the salary for one part-time coach, Mr. Joseph Balzli, a close friend of the brothers. The contract was a good one for the period, and the brothers were satisfied.

After about $65,000 in repairs and alterations in 1948, the school on Clay and Howard streets was in excellent shape compared to the one the brothers had left. It was a three-story brick building with 12 classrooms that could accommodate 400 students in Grades 1-12. It included a cafeteria to seat up to 175 students, as well as an auditorium to seat 425, a spacious library, and a science lab. The brothers added a chapel and converted the third floor into their living quarters which were neatly arranged and comfortably furnished. The new location provided a much larger playground. Johnson Field, renamed St. Aloysius Athletic Field, became one of the best in the state through the efforts of the Knights of Columbus and the school athletic club. It had permanent stands to seat over 2,000 people, a football field and track, as well as a field house and dressing rooms.



Before and after extensive renovations, St. Aloysius on Clay and Howard streets where the brothers taught from 1948 until the end of the 1967-68 school year

From 1949-54 Brother Mark Thornton served as principal, and then Brother Anselm Maguire from 1954-59. In its new setting, St. Aloysius continued to excel. As in the past, about 20 percent of its student body came from Protestant and Jewish families seeking quality education for their children in a value-oriented environment. The 10 brothers at St. Aloysius were happy and related well with the students, their parents, and the pastor. Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, summarized their situation in Vicksburg very succinctly in his 1953 visitation report: *"a model community in every way."*

St. Aloysius had only 287 students in Grades 2-12 in 1954-55. Brother Farrel Lorio taught 54 second-graders in one room while Brother Cecil Hebert had 44 students in Grades 7-8 combined in one room. Brother Anselm Maguire, principal, taught English, religion, and science to the 12 seniors. He also moderated the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart. Extracurricular programs included the band moderated by Brother Herman Boland and junior sports coached by Brothers Victor Bendillo, Justin Voigt, and Cecil Hebert.

By the time Brother Foster Zibilich became principal in 1959, the number of brothers on the faculty had decreased to seven, and the school had hired three lay men and one woman. After the two lower grades were discontinued, there remained 255 students in Grades 4-12. Brother Foster, a strong leader, easily won great respect in the school and the community. Even though the parents highly respected the brothers, there were very few religious vocations from Vicksburg's Catholic families. When Brother André Robichaud visited as provincial, he attributed it to the fact that Vicksburg averaged a greater number of broken homes than most cities and that the boys were somewhat spoiled. The brothers, however, always found the students in Vicksburg very docile and easy to teach.

Brother Mark Thornton, a popular principal who was respected as an outstanding educator, returned to Vicksburg as principal in 1963. By then only five brothers were stationed at St. Aloysius. One of them, Brother Cornelius Keohane, was 74 years old and retired. The brothers in Vicksburg felt the effects of the decline in vocations. In 1965 Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, wrote to Monsignor Michael McCarthy, pastor of St. Paul's Church, explaining the financial situation of the province and showing how the salaries being paid the brothers in Vicksburg were insufficient to cover expenses. He asked for $2,633.51 annually for each brother teaching full-time in the school. The pastor met with Brother Hubert on May 1, 1965, and agreed to pay the brothers $2,000 per year, a reasonable improvement. Brother Hubert accepted.

The province's personnel situation got even worse. By 1967 only four brothers remained in Vicksburg: Brothers Mark, Farrel, Cornelius, and Maurus Bordelon. Enrollment was 241 boys, 105 in high school and 136 in Grades 4-8. Five lay men and two women worked with the brothers. The school building was old and run down, and the parish did not have the means to improve it. Talk of consolidating St. Aloysius with the girls' school began. In the meantime, the city built several modern schools which attracted students from the Catholic schools.

On August 27, 1967, the provincial council unanimously decided that the brothers would withdraw from Vicksburg at the end of the 1967-68 school year because of shortage of personnel and the difficulties involved in managing and maintaining such a small school. In a letter to Bishop Joseph Brunini, apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson, Brother Hubert wrote: *"For me, personally, and for all the Brothers, it is a great loss. The people will miss the Brothers, I know, but, believe me, the Brothers have a great love for the people of Vicksburg, and it is we, it seems, who are turning our backs on those who have endeared themselves to us and for whom we have deep and lasting feelings."* (Letter, September 25, 1967)

The bishop responded to the provincial on October 10: *"The people of Vicksburg were shocked to learn of the withdrawal of the Brothers from St. Aloysius. . . . Certainly we are grateful to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart for staffing St. Aloysius for so many years. I know, of course, from personal observation the wonderful spirit of the Brothers and the great amount of leadership they have provided to all of those fortunate enough to be students of the Brothers."* On the day of the announcement of the brothers' withdrawal, the *Vicksburg Evening Post* commented in an editorial: *"Down through the years Brothers' boys have made their mark as leaders in our community, and in other areas as well. The list of distinguished graduates of St. Aloysius is long indeed."*

Brother Farrel Lorio, who taught for 20 years at St. Aloysius, summed up the brothers' reaction: *"Through the years the Brothers have always had a most cordial relationship with everyone in town. It is indeed with sad hearts that the brothers leave."* (*Province Monthly*, March-April 1968, p. 3) After the brothers left Vicksburg, diocesan priests took over the direction of St. Aloysius which was combined with St. Francis to form a coeducational school staffed by the Sisters of Mercy and lay teachers. When St. Aloysius celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1979, the centennial program recalled the brothers: *"The St. Aloysius community owes a debt of gratitude to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart who founded St. Aloysius College in 1879 and staffed the school with such intense dedication for 90 years."*

CHAPTER 29

ST. JOSEPH'S HOUSE OF STUDIES

Metuchen, New Jersey

For nearly 60 years, from 1902 until 1961, hundreds of brothers made their novitiate at St. Joseph's in Metuchen, New Jersey. Thus, Metuchen holds a special place in the hearts of many brothers. The property that the brothers bought on Plainfield Avenue in 1902 consisted of more than 75 acres of good farm land on which stood an old three-story mansion and several farm buildings. In *A Century of Service*, Brother Macarius Pierce described in detail the difficulties that the brothers endured during their first 40 years in Metuchen. For many years the province was too poor to construct proper buildings at Metuchen because the brothers always gave priority to their schools over the house of studies in order to improve and expand their services to youth.

For many years, postulants, novices, and scholastics, as well as the brothers working with them all lived in cramped quarters at St. Joseph's. According to some stories of *"the good ole days,"* brothers even used an old pigeon coop and a barn for sleeping quarters. But brothers took pride in their pioneering tradition, and their sacrifices developed into a family spirit of sharing and a religious spirit of service.

Gradually, through hard work and strict economy, the brothers managed to improve conditions at Metuchen. In 1921 a beautiful chapel was constructed, and in 1924 a new brick wing was added to the south side of the house for the postulants who were being attracted in increasing numbers to join the community. The new wing provided classrooms, a study hall, dormitory, kitchen, and refectory. Novices continued to use the north wing of the old middle building. Also in the '20s a concrete dairy barn was added, and then a new tailor shop and laundry building after a fire in 1935. Other buildings put up over the years included a chaplain's residence, a shower room, and several farm buildings such as the chicken coops, pig pens, barns, tool sheds, and garages.

The vast grounds of St. Joseph's made it ideal for a house of studies. A large white statue of St. Joseph graced the spacious front lawn which was flanked by two rows of tulip trees leading to the old house. Behind the house were a lovely horseshoe-shaped pine alley and a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes which lent an atmosphere of quiet reflection. In addition to the many playing fields for softball, baseball, and football, there were hard-surfaced play areas for

basketball, tennis, volleyball, and handball. One of the favorite features of the property at St. Joseph's was Woodland Lake which was used for skating in the winter. This beloved pond was large enough for four hockey rinks, and many a hotly contested match took place on its ice.

Front view of St. Joseph's House of Studies in Metuchen

A sacred spot on the grounds was the brothers' cemetery established in 1906 following the death of Brother Norbert St-Chély, former superior general, who had retired to Metuchen in 1904. Since then more than 50 Brothers of the Sacred Heart have been buried in the community cemetery at St. Joseph's. Among them is another superior general, Brother Albertinus Juge, who died December 7, 1959, at Metuchen where he spent his first and last years in the United States. A pioneer at Metuchen in 1903, he served as novice master at St. Joseph's for 11 years. He was provincial for nine years, assistant general for six years, and superior general for 15 years. Brother Albertinus was a great lover of the Institute, an exemplary religious, and a master of the spiritual life.

Another outstanding figure in the history of St. Joseph's is Brother Gilbert Reuter who served as novice master for 31 years. When Brother Gilbert was named provincial in 1946, he had already served 17 years as novice master. Thus, he knew at first hand how desperately the antiquated buildings needed renovating. They were overcrowded as well. Novice classes averaged between 15 to 20 brothers, and there were usually more than 60 postulants at Metuchen every year. As provincial, Brother Gilbert tried to address the needs at Metuchen, but sufficient money was lacking to do more than some simple remodeling. The buildings at Metuchen may have been somewhat shaky, but Brother Gilbert made sure that the formation programs offered there were unquestionably solid. After his term as provincial, Brother Gilbert happily returned to Metuchen as

novice master, taking over from Brother Nicholas Geisenberg who had replaced him for three years.

Thus many more novices were to share in the experience of Brother Gilbert, their novice master, referring to them as *"you old goof"* when they made mistakes. The basic formation program remained the same year after year. The following detailed daily schedule drawn up by Brother Nicholas in 1949 and approved by Brother Gilbert, as provincial, was typical. The daily routine was set and there was very little, if any, free time for the novices. Everything was done together.

DAILY PROGRAM OF THE NOVICES IN 1949

5:00 Rising

5:15 Morning Prayers

5:30 Meditation, Angelus

6:05 Litany of Sacred Heart and Office

6:15 Holy Mass

7:00 Breakfast

7:20 Domestic Employments

8:00 Conference

8:30 Recitation of Holy Gospel

9:20 Organ Practice of Church Music
Study of Gregorian Plain Chant
Practice of Liturgical Singing

10:00 Explanation and Recitation of Holy Rule

10:20 Recess

10:30 Manual for Novices

10:50 Church History

11:25 Singing

11:55 Beads of the Sacred Heart
Prayers for the Propagation of the Faith

12:00 Angelus, Dinner

12:30 Domestic Employments, Recreation

1:07 Recitation of Vespers and Compline of Office

1:15 Study of Christian Perfection and Holy Gospel in French
Review of French Grammar

2:00 Study of Christian Perfection in English

2:20 Church Latin and Review of Latin Grammar

3:10 Bible History

3:30 Recreation

5:00 Study of Religion (Catechism)

5:30 Spiritual Reading

6:00 Supper

6:30 Domestic Employments, Recreation

7:15 Beads, Examination of Conscience, Matins and Lauds

7:45 Study of Vows, Study Period

8:30 Points of Meditation, Night Prayers, Bed

Special occasions called for a walk in the country or along the railroad tracks. One traditional hike was the 10-mile trek to Mount Washington in the Watchung Mountains on the feast of St. Stanislaus. Then, too, there were picnics, campfires, and games of all sorts. In his *House of Characters*, published in 1993, Brother Pascal Ackerman recalled with great delight special memories of the novices' life at Metuchen: hauling discarded railroad ties from the Reading and Leheigh Valley railroads and chopping them to use for firewood, pitching hay on the farm, picking grapes in the vineyards, gathering apples in the orchard, skating on the pond, playing baseball or touch football, and walking outside praying the rosary. Two afternoons a week, usually Wednesday and Saturday, were devoted to domestic employments and manual labor. The novices' work on the farm, vineyards, and dairy helped immeasurably in providing food for their table, thereby cutting the cost of operating such a large house of formation.

Work in the laundry and the tailor shop holds many special memories for brothers who made their novitiate at Metuchen, mainly because of Brother Pascal, province tailor at Metuchen for 30 years until the division of the province in 1960. During his many years as tailor, Brother Pascal stitched to perfection a phenomenal number of cassocks, more than 3,500 at an average of two or three a week. (*Province Monthly,* Jan. 1964, p. 3) Also, he washed a ton of laundry each week at Metuchen where he was a great influence on the novices. His patience, devotion to duty, and happy disposition modeled for the novices the life of a brother able to spread the joy that comes from serving the Lord. *"His greeting of*

the novices," as Brother Lin Brou recalled, *"was not just an exchange of words, but an exchange of smiles."* (*Province Monthly,* November 1952, p. 3)

Another legendary figure at Metuchen for 50 years from 1930-80 was Brother George Woodburn. As a maintenance expert, he saved the community much money in repairs. The many novices who worked with him were positively influenced and inspired by his boundless energy, love of the community, concern for the poor, and personal prayer. Brother George taught the novices the value of time and the importance of organization whether the lesson he gave them was sorting nails according to size and type, the correct use of the exact tool for each job, or his insistence that all tools be returned promptly and to their proper place.

Vow Day was the highlight of each year at Metuchen. Traditionally on August 15, the feast of the Assumption, the novices made their first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience for one year. It was a day of great joy and celebration with a special Mass sung in Gregorian chant. Favorite songs from the Metuchen hymnal such as *Assumpta Est Maria, O Sacred Heart We Plight to Thee, O Coeur de Mon Jesu, Ecce Quam Bonum,* or *Animé de l'Amour* filled the air.

For years there was talk of moving the novitiate from Metuchen to relieve overcrowded conditions and to separate the novices from the postulants. One place considered was an estate in nearby Blairstown. But in February 1951, the provincial council voted against its purchase. Instead, the council voted to borrow $200,000 to construct a new wing at Metuchen to relieve the cramped conditions. But the council rejected a construction bid of $270,000 which *"was far in excess of the estimate, and the project did not justify the erection of the building."* (Minutes, June 5, 1951) Rather than a major addition to the main building, a new dormitory for the novices and a new science room for the school were built. The chapel was renovated and the shower rooms and lavatory facilities enlarged. New courts were constructed outside for the play area: eight for basketball, eight for tennis, and six for handball.

Brother Gilbert continued until 1958 as novice master at Metuchen with the help of three different assistants: Brothers Armand Little, Marcel Riviere, and Michael Holmes. In 1958 Brother Aldric Smith replaced Brother Gilbert as novice master. In August 1961, Brother Aldric moved with 17 novices to a new novitiate in Belvidere, New Jersey.

Besides the novitiate program at Metuchen, there was also the postulants' program which usually involved about 60 boys in Grades 9-12 from the North and South. After the juniorate opened in Daphne, Alabama, in 1950, only the

seniors from the South went to Metuchen. The postulants followed a regular high school program. The basic curriculum consisted of six subjects each year. All grade levels included religion, English, and a math. Freshmen also studied French, civics, and speech. Sophomores continued with French and speech and added American history. Juniors took chemistry, world history, and typewriting together with the seniors who also studied physics and one year of Latin or Spanish.

To help the postulant master, four brothers were usually assigned to teach the various classes of 15 to 20 students each. Between 1947 and 1960 the following brothers taught the postulants and also served as postulant master for a brief period: Brothers Alexis Klee, Felician Fourrier, Anselm Maguire, Ashton Brisolara, Bernard Tunney, Marcel Riviere, and Leo Godin. Brother Eric Goguen, who served as postulant master for seven years between 1949 and 1957, brought stability to the program. He was assisted over the years by Brothers Alfred Kolb, Marcel Riviere, Mel McLinskey, Nelson LaRose, Lee Barker, and Robert Connolly. These assistants taught classes along with other brothers at the juniorate and led the postulants in all of the activities associated with their formation program: prayers, house chores, manual work, organized sports, singing, and many recreational activities.

Three different groups of brothers lived together at Metuchen: the novices and novitiate staff, the juniorate staff, and brothers taking care of temporalities. The local director at St. Joseph's House of Studies coordinated the work of the 18 to 20 brothers who made up the various subcommunities. Between 1947 and 1960, this task was filled by five brothers: Brothers Paul Couffort, Edgar Gagnon, Bernard Tunney, Daniel Farrell, and Celsus Craffey. Brother Celsus, director from 1953-59, brought new meaning to the role. He worked very hard to develop the Novitiate Auxiliary Fund and the various burses that were established in memory of deceased brothers. A completed burse consisted of donations totaling $5,000, the yearly interest of which was used for formation programs. The Novitiate Auxiliary Association of friends and alumni of the brothers supported vocations through prayer, almsgiving, and good works. In thanksgiving for donations to the formation program, the brothers promised contributors that they would remember them daily in their prayers.

Brother Celsus did not limit his fund-raising efforts to the formation program. He raised money also for the Metuchen Building Fund. These fund-raising projects went well beyond mailing out mite-boxes. In 1955, for example, he organized a card party for 900 people at the Statler Hotel in New York. It was the seventh annual such event sponsored by the brothers in hopes of one day constructing a school at Metuchen. While Brother Celsus was director at

Metuchen, this dream of the brothers was partially fulfilled. In September 1954, two brothers at Metuchen began teaching at St. Francis of Assisi Elementary School. After more than 50 years in the diocese of Trenton and after repeated requests from pastors for their help in the parochial school, the brothers at Metuchen had finally moved beyond formation work into a regular school setting.

Brothers Vincent Barton and Terrence Gibbons taught boys in the seventh and eighth grades at St. Francis and were paid $1,200 per year by the parish. Brother Vincent served also as principal in 1954. The next year a third brother was added to the staff. For the next five years, brothers took turns serving one-year terms as principal. After Brother Vincent in 1954 came Brothers Terrence, Michael Holmes, Vincent again in 1957, Gaspar Rodrigue, and Michael again in 1959. The brothers found the boys well behaved, studious, ambitious, and responsive to their efforts. The brothers worked well with the Sisters of Mercy who taught the other classes at St. Francis.

After the novitiate was moved to Belvidere in 1961, the brothers at Metuchen used the vacated quarters to take in 150 ninth-grade boys while constructing a new high school building for $1 million. In 1963 a dream of the brothers for many years came true with the completion of the new building for St. Joseph's High School which could accommodate 800 students.

Front view of St. Joseph's High School in Metuchen completed in 1963

CHAPTER 30

SACRED HEART NOVITIATE

Belvidere, New Jersey

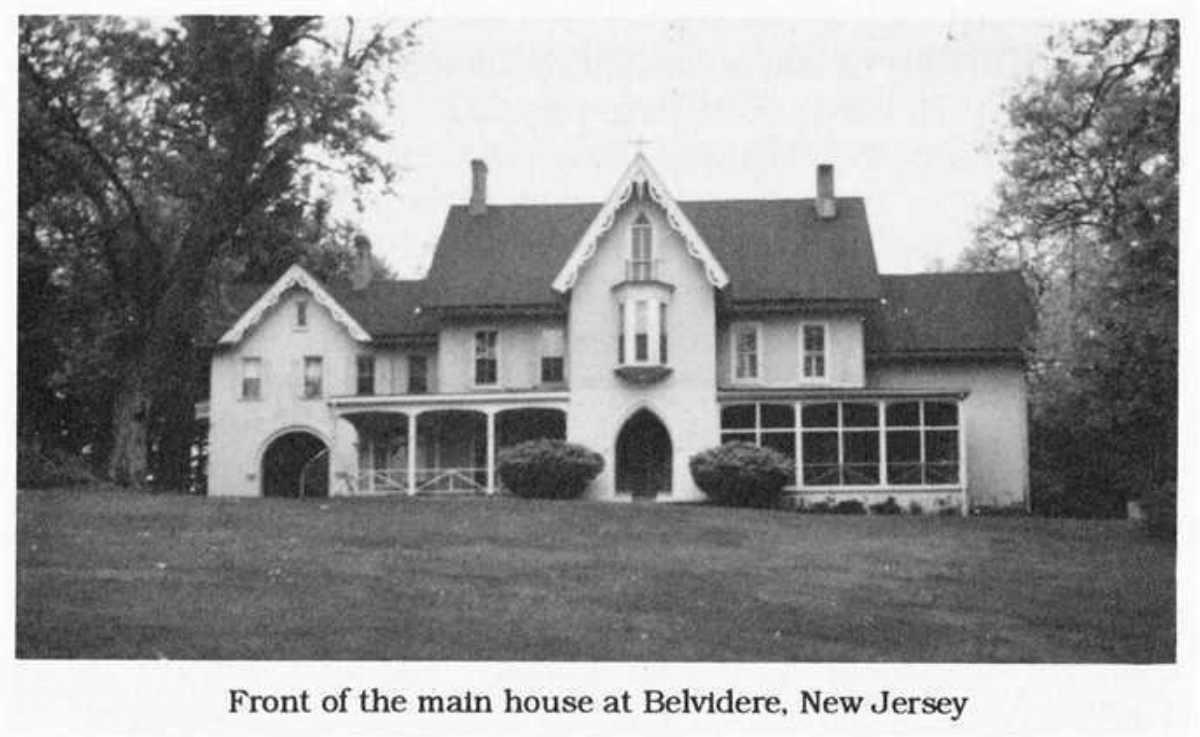
Shortly after the division of the United States Province in March 1960, the New York Province began addressing the long-standing problem of the novitiate. Metuchen clearly was not an ideal place for it, especially with the new high school being developed there. In November of 1960, the New York provincial council unanimously accepted a proposal made by the New Orleans council to have a combined novitiate at Daphne for the next four years. The general council approved the plan in December, but it did not materialize because some brothers questioned its constitutionality.

The New Orleans council requested a ruling from Rome on January 7, 1961. But that very same day, before a ruling could be rendered, Brother Eric Gougen, provincial of New York, wrote to the general council: *"The fact that the move to Daphne was not constitutionally possible was providential for the ideal novitiate property seems available."* On behalf of the New York provincial council, he requested and obtained permission to buy an 82-acre tract of land in Belvidere, New Jersey, for use as a novitiate. The asking price was $100,000, and the brothers acquired it for $97,000.

Belvidere, located in northwest New Jersey just across the Delaware River from Pennsylvania, about five miles from the Delaware Water Gap, was a town of about 2,500 people in 1960. The location proved ideal because of its proximity to both New York City and Metuchen, being about 70 miles from each. The former country estate, well secluded for a novitiate, comprised a 32-room mansion, a large two-story barn, beautiful landscaped grounds with majestic blue spruce trees, ponds and gardens, a swimming pool, and even a greenhouse.

On August 15, 1961, the novitiate was officially transferred from St. Joseph's in Metuchen, where it had been since 1902, to Sacred Heart Novitiate in Belvidere. Brother Aldric Smith, a member of the New York Province who had been novice master at Metuchen since 1958, continued as novice master. Assigned to work with him as an assistant was Brother Raymond Houck of the New Orleans Province. The 17 novices from the two provinces were lodged in small groups in several of the rooms on the top floor of the main house. In the meantime a $85,000 construction project began on a new building that would provide 24 private rooms and adequate shower and toilet facilities. Several large

rooms on the bottom floor of the old three-story manor house served as a chapel, a refectory for the novices, a dining room for the professed brothers, a library, an office for the master, and a large kitchen. On the second floor were private rooms for the professed brothers and a large classroom for the novices.



Front of the main house at Belvidere, New Jersey

The spacious grounds provided plenty of room for softball and other organized sports, but the swimming pool was by far the choice spot for recreation. In the winter there were opportunities for skating on the nearby Pequest River and sledding on the property. The surrounding area near Mount Manunkuchunk with the Kittatinny Mountains and the Poconos off in the distance made for magnificent long walks.

The novices' daily schedule was somewhat less rigorous than that of 1949 at Metuchen, but the program was typically pre-Vatican II. Novices still studied the *Manual for Novices* and the *Catechism of Religious Profession,* and they continued to read such authors as Rodriguez and Tanqueray. As at Metuchen, courses were Christian Virtues, Church History, the Rule of Life, Liturgy, Scripture, and History of the Institute.

Besides the novice master and assistant, three other brothers lived at the novitiate: Brothers Daniel Farrell, local director; Cyrus Harrington, cook; and Theodore Desnoyers, who took care of the grounds. Even though few brothers lived at Belvidere as compared to Metuchen, the novices were still separated from the professed brothers and were not allowed to speak with them. That regulation applied as well to visiting brothers who came to Belvidere for

weekends to relax or work on the grounds. The novices were truly isolated at Belvidere.

It was early June before the novices moved into the newly constructed building. The following month, postulants, who would "take the habit" as novices in August, arrived in order to learn the novitiate routine from the outgoing class. Work was hurriedly being done to finish the beautiful chapel which raised the construction costs at Belvidere to $100,000. On August 15, 1962, the first novice class at Sacred Heart Novitiate in Belvidere pronounced vows in the newly completed chapel. Of the 13 brothers who made their first profession, five were from the South. The next year there were 11 first professions, two for New York and nine for New Orleans.

In 1963 Brother Gilbert Reuter, novice master for more than a quarter of a century at Metuchen, replaced Brother Aldric as novice master at Belvidere. Brother Gilbert was 70 years old, but still in good health. The rest of the local community remained the same, with the addition of Brother Eric, who the previous year had made Belvidere the provincial headquarters. In 1964 Brother Raphael Carley, vocation director, made his headquarters there as well. This community remained intact until 1966. Brother Ray Hebert of New Orleans replaced Brother Raymond Houck as assistant novice master. Brother Daniel Devitt, who succeeded Brother Eric as provincial of New York, also joined the local community along with Brother Dominic LeBlanc, provincial secretary.

The novitiate community at Belvidere struggled to implement the renewal called for by Vatican II. Age and the traditional training of the brothers, not to mention the elderly Dominican chaplain, made change slow and difficult. Brother Gilbert, at 74, was heroically still serving as master of novices. He was well aware of the need to update the program, but he knew his own limitations and those of the local community. In characteristic humility and concern for the welfare of the novices, he wrote to Brother Jules LeDoux, superior general, stating: *"A younger man should take over as of August 15. . . . I am getting nervous and jittery. . . . The next novice class will number about twelve. It is desirable to continue some of the apostolic work they began at Spring Hill as postulants. I cannot drive a car nor am I suited to accompany the groups in their apostolic work and also to follow up this work."* (Letter, April 22, 1967)

Thus, Brother Raymond Houck succeeded Brother Gilbert as novice master in August 1967. At the same time, Brother Cyrus replaced Brother Daniel Farrell as local director. In 1967-68 there were four novices for the New York Province and 11 for New Orleans. Most novice classes at Belvidere averaged about 15 members, but in 1968-69 there were only six novices, four from New

York and two from New Orleans. Brother Patrick McManmon of the New York Province replaced Brother Ray Hebert as assistant novice master for 1968-69. At the end of that session on August 15, 1969, the combined novitiate at Belvidere closed after only eight years of operation.

Each province then established and staffed its own novitiate. The New York Province transferred its novices to Coindre Hall in Huntington, New York. The New Orleans Province established its novitiate in New Orleans at 1920 Robert E. Lee Boulevard in 1971. Ten years later, an inter-province novitiate opened in New Orleans on City Park Avenue.

Belvidere Summer Sessions

After the novitiate moved from Belvidere, the New York Province used the beautiful grounds and house there for the Sacred Heart Renewal Center. This center served as the site for a series of religious renewal programs sponsored jointly by the three United States provinces beginning in 1979. Each provincial council named one brother to a staff to organize and facilitate the program. Eighteen brothers participated in *The Summer of '79*, the first such renewal session. The Belvidere center proved to be an ideal setting with its magnificent grounds, swimming pool, and rustic barn which served as a conference and community room. The brothers' evaluations of the sessions were so positive that year after year the three provinces offered another session the following summer.

The New Orleans provincial council changed its staff member frequently to give several brothers an opportunity to serve and to assure that fresh ideas entered the planning process. As staff director in 1985, Brother Adrian Gaudin, in an effort to meet the needs of more brothers in the Church, welcomed brothers from six other congregations to *The Summer of '85*. All subsequent sessions were open to all men religious. Three years later, the provincials began planning for a new and different type of renewal program at Belvidere, so *The Summer of '88* moved to the Oblate Retreat House in Hudson, New Hampshire. The three provinces continued to sponsor the program in Hudson until 1991 when the National Assembly of Religious Brothers assumed responsibility for it. Brother Willie Morin of the New England Province remained as staff director.

In 1989, the three United States provinces began sponsoring their new program at Belvidere, one with a focus on forming community. Four summer sessions for brothers in the three provinces were held through 1992. From 1979-92, more than 220 Brothers of the Sacred Heart took part in the summer sessions

of one or both programs at Belvidere. Besides offering opportunities for renewal, these sessions awakened in the brothers a deeper appreciation of the Institute as participants formed friendships with brothers from other provinces.

CHAPTER 31

ST. ROSE OF LIMA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Brooklyn, New York

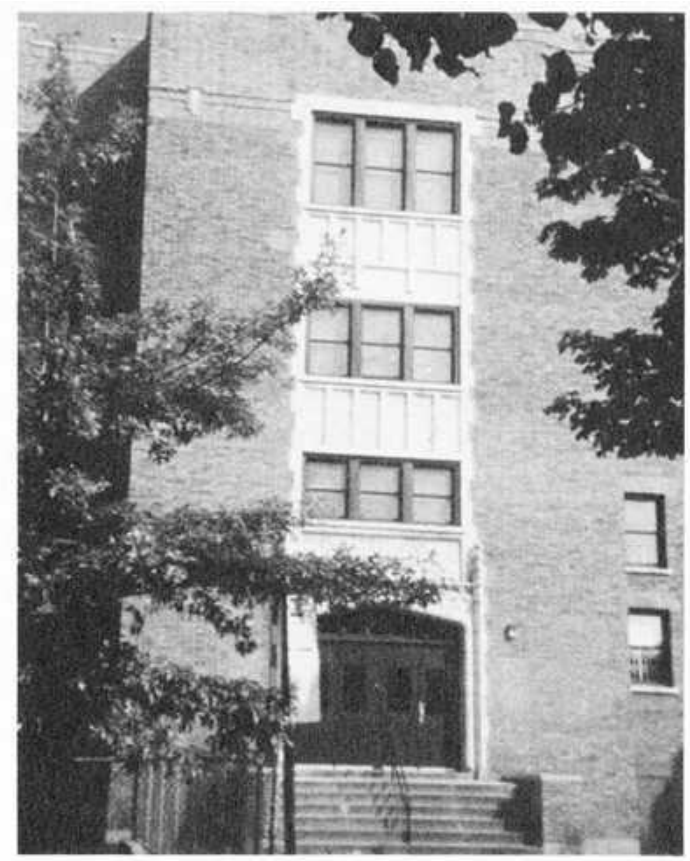
The history of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart at St. Rose of Lima Elementary School in Brooklyn, New York, began in 1919 after the Rev. James McAleese, pastor, wrote Brother Maurice Chatras, provincial: *"My assistants have just been over to Far Rockaway and saw the Brothers there. Why can't we have Brothers?"* (*Province Monthly*, May-June, 1965, p. 2) Brother Maurice responded favorably and sent three brothers under the direction of Brother Matthias Joy. They took responsibility for the boys' division of St. Rose in the Brooklyn diocese in September of 1919. The brothers taught the three upper classes while the lower classes were taught by lay women and Sisters of St. Joseph who managed the girls' division.

Before long, the number of brothers at St. Rose increased to four and then five. When Monsignor James Casey, a great admirer of the brothers' work, became pastor in 1931, he enlarged the brothers' residence to accommodate a staff of seven brothers. Brother Matthias Joy, principal at St. Rose from 1919-25, returned to Brooklyn in 1931 and served another six-year term as principal. The school prospered under the capable administration of this experienced school man. Brother Edgar Gagnon, who became principal in 1940, and Brother Theodore Desnoyers, who served as his dean of discipline, continued to develop the close relationship that Brother Matthias had formed with Monsignor Casey.

After Brother Edgar completed his six-year term at St. Rose, Brother Vincent Barton started a six-year term in 1946. St. Rose was on a half-year system with two graduations annually, and each brother was required to teach two grades. In spite of such a system of double classes, most of the seven brothers assigned to St. Rose usually found time to pursue university studies at St. John's or Fordham University to further their professional competence. These studies did not interfere with their extracurricular duties with the sodalities, the drama club, and the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart.

Under Brother Vincent's direction, the half-year system at St. Rose was dropped, and classes were conducted on a September-June basis. This allowed the faculty to improve the academic program and to departmentalize the upper grades. By the early '50s, St. Rose Elementary School was old and terribly

overcrowded. Enrollment reached more than 600 boys and 500 girls in 1952. Brothers' classes at St. Rose averaged 50 boys each in Grades 3-8. Some of the lower grades had as many as 70 or 80 students in rooms designed for 40.



St. Rose of Lima Elementary School on East Eighth Street in Brooklyn, New York

Following Brother Vincent as director of the Brothers and principal of the boys' division of the school was Brother Bernadine Leanman, who served from 1952-56. Under his leadership, the school continued to supplement intellectual and spiritual training with a successful athletic program, especially in basketball in which the school won several championships on the interscholastic level. In addition to basketball, intramural sports included handball and slapball. Brother Walter Doyle, who taught at St. Rose from1951-54, organized a program in track which continued to develop over the years and which led to several diocesan championships. St. Rose dominated track in its league and won deanery championship from 1964-67.

Brothers Leonard Levell and Nelson LaRose served briefly as director before Brother Anselm Maguire began a five-year term in 1959. The staff of brothers had been reduced to only four in 1958, but was increased to five in 1959. Monsignor Casey continued his close association with the brothers at St. Rose and took an active interest in the school. Students excelled in both academics and athletics. The brothers introduced many educational improvements. For example, a reading program involving the placement of students according to their ability was initiated. And in sports St. Rose basketball teams coached by the brothers consistently won trophies in the Catholic Youth Organization league.

In 1965 Brother Thomas Mullins, the last brother to direct St. Rose of Lima, began a two-year term. The old school building was in need of repair, and living conditions were inconvenient. The brothers had to climb four flights of

stairs four to six times daily; but there were few complaints since the brothers there in the '60s were quite young. One of them, Brother Brian Curry, who taught at St. Rose in 1963-64, remembered it as *"a great place to teach."*

Pressed for manpower to staff its high schools, missions, and houses of formation, the New York provincial council decided to withdraw the brothers from St. Rose at the end of the 1966-67 school session. (Council Minutes, September 24, 1966) The council had considered the move years earlier; but, in deference to Monsignor Casey, it waited until he retired to make the move. It was not easy for the province to leave St. Rose. The brothers usually found the St. Rose students not only academically and athletically talented, but also generally docile and pious. St. Rose had always been a rich source of vocations to the priesthood and religious life; and the brothers, who regularly sponsored vocational guidance programs for the students, had attracted their fair share of candidates from Brooklyn. During the 48 years that the brothers taught at St. Rose of Lima Elementary School from 1919-67, the parish produced more than 100 religious vocations, 17 of them to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

CHAPTER 32

COINDRE HALL

Huntington, New York

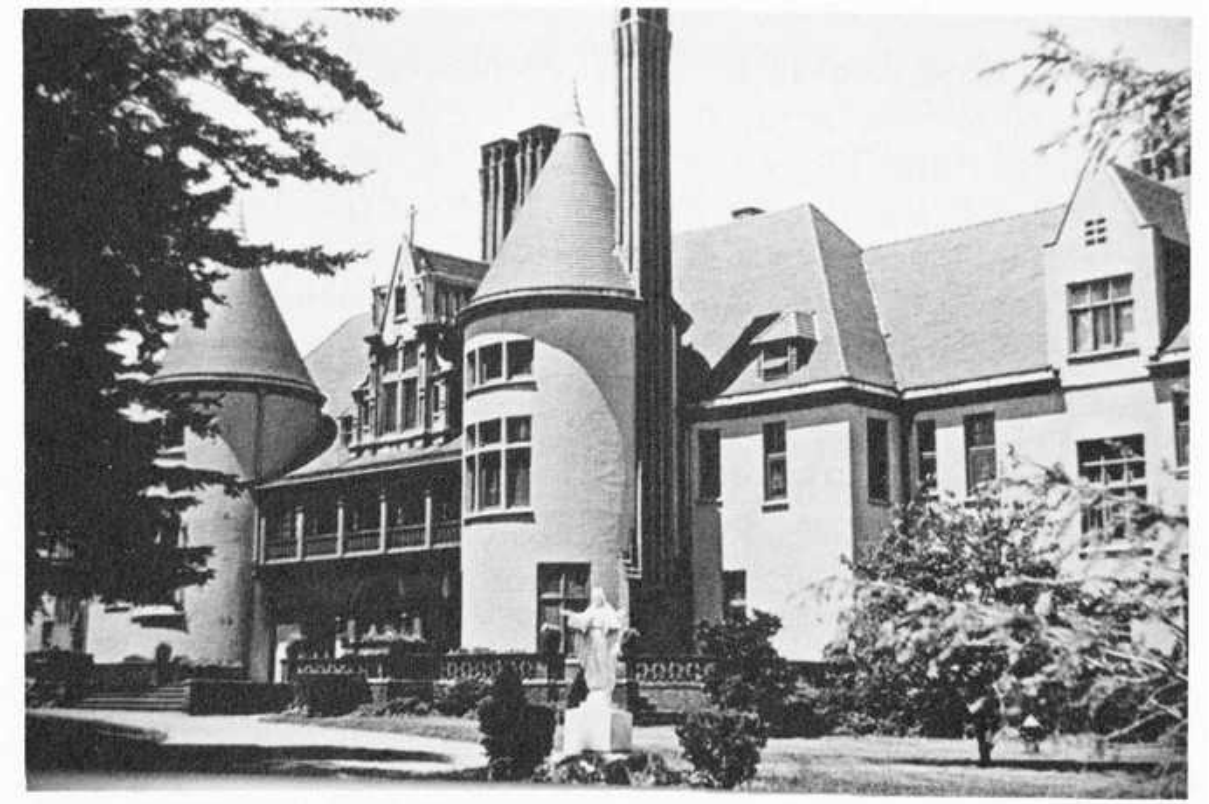
In October of 1939, Brother Martinian Pauc, provincial, purchased for the brothers a magnificent piece of property at West Neck, Huntington, Long Island, for an amazing bargain of only $60,000, thanks to many good friends who negotiated on the brothers' behalf. The property's assessed value totaled $500,000. A large manor house overlooking Huntington Harbor highlighted the 31-acre piece of property which included a lake and a boat house on Lloyd Harbor. The three-story mansion, built by Mr. George McKesson Brown in 1912, was modeled on a 19th-century French manor house. Its turreted towers, old-fashioned fireplaces, chandeliers hanging from high ceilings, and grand staircase made of teakwood gave it an air of elegance and grandeur.

With an expenditure of only $45,000 to make some adaptations to the old house and to construct additional buildings to provide a chapel, recreation hall, refectory, and classrooms, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart were soon ready to open an elementary boarding school for boys in Grades 5-8. They had the blessings of Bishop Thomas Molloy of Brooklyn and the full cooperation of Monsignor Joseph McClancy, diocesan superintendent of schools, who suggested that the brothers name the school after their founder, the Rev. André Coindre. On April 20, 1940, the brothers obtained a charter for Coindre Hall from the New York Board of Regents. In September, with a staff of 13 brothers, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart opened the boarding school and registered 38 pupils by the end of the first session.

Thanks to a good public relations program as well as word of mouth of the students who were happy with the homey atmosphere at Coindre Hall, the second session opened with 78 boarders. Parents were well pleased with the Christian education and character training that the brothers were giving their young sons. By the time that Brother Oswin Horner, Coindre Hall's first principal, returned to the missions in 1945, the enrollment had reached 113.

Under Brother Martinian, who served as president of Coindre Hall and local superior of the brothers from 1946 to 1952, the school was always filled to capacity with 120 students. The brothers quickly built the school's reputation for scholastic excellence, and prospective students had to be put on a waiting list. Brother Martinian took a special interest in the physical development of Coindre

Hall, as did its former owner, the very influential Mr. George K. Brown, who became a close friend of the brothers and an admirer of their work with youth. The brothers also enjoyed excellent relations with the pastors of St. Patrick's Parish in Huntington.



Coindre Hall at West Neck in Huntington, Long Island

During Brother Martinian's six years as president, Brothers Howard McLaughlin, Linus Meyers, and Walter Bluhm served as principal of the school. From 1952-58 Brother Daniel Farrell was president with Brothers Vincent Barton, Lionel Hearld, and Bertin Ryan serving as principal. By 1954 there were 19 brothers and 118 boarders at Coindre Hall, an excellent brother-pupil ratio, but the brothers were still quite busy. Brothers were occupied with many duties in running the boarding school. Five or six brothers taught in Grades 4-8, two served as full-time prefects, two or three worked in the kitchen where they prepared meals and washed the dishes, others worked in the laundry, and still others did maintenance work around the grounds. The brothers did everything without any hired help. Besides conducting a comprehensive program of intramural sports which included baseball, softball, soccer, football, dodge ball, curb ball, and stick ball, the brothers coached the varsity football and baseball teams. Other brothers moderated the confraternity, the choir, and the altar boys' society.

Shortly after the establishment of Coindre Hall, the brothers started a six-week summer camp there during July and August. Camp Coindre Hall soon became recognized as one of the best summer camps in the area. The 120 campers were placed according to size into one of three groups, and each group was under the direction of four brothers who served as counselors. The boys were closely supervised in a spirit of cheerful camaraderie and good fellowship. Activities at Camp Coindre Hall consisted of swimming, baseball, archery, horseshoes, and the usual crafts. Special weekly highlights included a field day, campfires, hikes, and movies. The brothers used the camp to teach values as well as to offer fun activities for young boys. Camping, according to a brochure published by the brothers, was a way of life in which boys were encouraged to appreciate the beauty of nature and to develop a sense of fair play and tolerance toward others.

During the summer months, many brothers, postulants and scholastics spent a week or more working on the vast grounds at Coindre Hall to maintain a manicured appearance. Frequently, too, Coindre Hall was the site of retreats and other gatherings of the brothers living and working in the North.

Brother Albert Guarino, then known as Brother Alexander, served as president-principal of Coindre Hall in 1959. The school continued to be filled to capacity with 120 students, but the number of brothers was reduced to 14. All were overworked. But the brothers were happy and did good work. Brother Gonzaga McCarthy, elderly and ill, still managed to work some in the laundry where he folded clothes. Brother Gonzaga spent his last 22 years at Coindre Hall where he became renowned for his neatness and his insistence on always striving for perfection.

Brother Daniel Devitt followed Brother Albert as principal in 1960 and as president in 1961. While Coindre Hall continued to be one of the main revenue-producing schools for the newly established New York Province, it also served as a center of formation. On January 14, 1961, the general council approved a proposal from the province to establish a juniorate at Coindre Hall. After the novitiate closed at Belvidere, New Jersey, Coindre Hall served as the novitiate in 1969 and 1970.

In 1965 when Coindre Hall celebrated its 25th anniversary, the New York Province expended $404,800 to construct the Brother Martinian Memorial gymnasium-auditorium and two classrooms. In 1967 the summer camp, which had closed in 1959, reopened but only for one year. Suffering from a shortage of personnel, the province was struggling to staff the school and maintain the vast property. So in 1971, *"after consultation with the brothers of the province, the*

provincial council voted to close Coindre Hall Boarding School . . . and sell the buildings and the land." (Annuaire, 65:165) Much of the furniture within the buildings was sold or transferred to other schools. In late November 1973, Brother Daniel Devitt, provincial, signed the papers for the sale of Coindre Hall to Suffolk County for $900,000. Today the property, known as Coindre Hall Park, houses The Museum of Long Island's Gold Coast. The brothers retain many pleasant memories of Coindre Hall with its mansion, boathouse, pier, beautiful landscapes, and waterfront views. But most of all, they remember the 30 years of ministry to more than 1,000 young boys in a caring and religious environment.

CHAPTER 33

ST. LUKE'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bronx, New York

At the request of Monsignor Robert Mulcahey, pastor of St. Luke's in the South Bronx, New York, six Brothers of the Sacred Heart began teaching in the parish grammar school there in 1943. Brother Nicholas Geisenberg was the first brother principal of the boys' division. The brothers' residence was a private apartment located at 470 East 138th Street, about three long blocks from the school and church. This living arrangement required the brothers to walk to Mass in the morning, return home for breakfast, and then rush to get back to school on time. The apartment was one among many in an immense block of narrow apartments, all four stories high.

The brothers taught the boys in Grades 6-8. Nuns from the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, New York, who had founded the school in 1903, taught the lower grades in mixed classes and managed the girls' division. The curriculum was the basic course of studies as regulated by the Archdiocese of New York, and students took diocesan examinations in January and June. The boys' division was in a separatethree-story building in the midst of other buildings. The area was one of heavy traffic and noise. The inner city was densely populated, first by Irish immigrants and later by African-Americans and Puerto Ricans. St. Luke's was always crowded, enrolling close to 1,700 students, about 300 of them in the boys' upper classes taught by the brothers.

In 1947 Brother Bertin Ryan began a five-year term as principal. He was followed during the '50s by Brother James Roussell, Aldric Smith, Dean Beary, and Walter Doyle. In 1952 during Brother James's administration, there were six brothers at St. Luke's teaching 260 boys in Grades 6-8. There were six classes, two for each grade, with 35 to 50 boys in each class. In addition to their regular classes, five of the brothers taught CCD classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The brothers also worked with the students in after-school activities, especially in basketball.

St. Luke's Elementary School in the Bronx

By 1959 when Brother Walter Doyle became principal, the brothers had dropped the sixth grade. The community at St. Luke's was reduced to four brothers who taught the two sections of the seventh and eighth grades. The brothers set up a library and a reading program for the students in 1959. After the division of the province in 1960, the New York Province had jurisdiction of St. Luke's. The New York Province continued to supply two or three brothers to teach and administer at St. Luke's Elementary School until the end of the 1981-82 school year. From 1960 to 1982, Brothers Stanley Colin, Raymond Shirvell, Aidan Curtin, Lawrence Seward, William Cawley, and Thomas Allen served as principal of St. Luke's.

In general, brothers found the students at St. Luke's docile, polite, willing, and hard-working. There was a good spirit among the students and an excellent rapport with the brothers. Students appreciated the interest that the brothers showed in them; they especially liked the special occasions when the brothers walked with them over the Triborough Bridge for a baseball game or a tour of the city. In 1963 more than 20 Brothers of the Sacred Heart in the New York Province all former students of St. Luke's gathered for a celebration with Monsignor Mulcahey, who was still pastor.

ST. JOSEPH'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

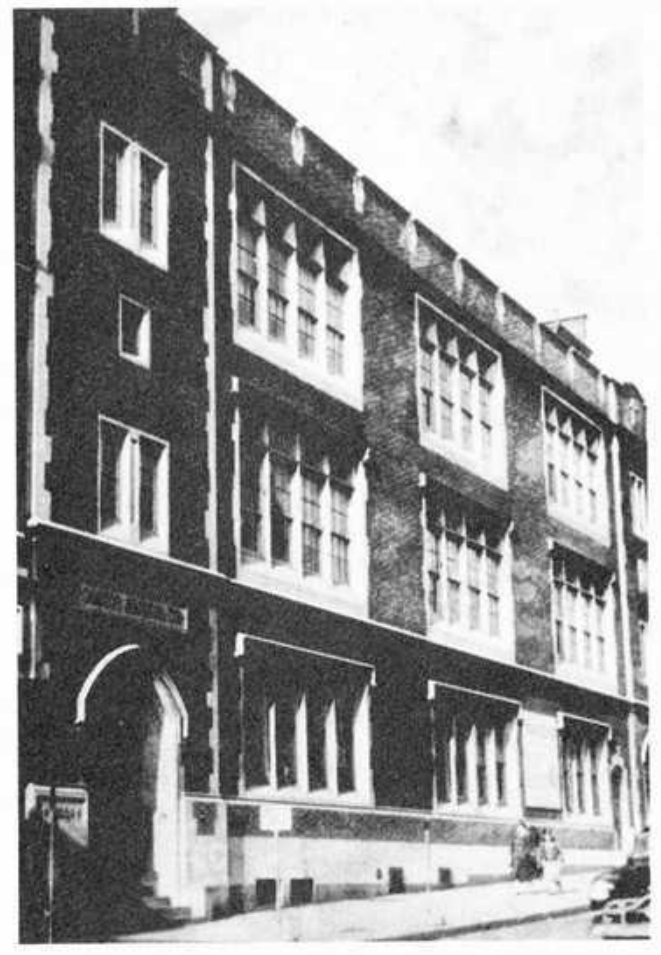
Bronx, New York

When Brother Gilbert Reuter was provincial, he established a second community in the Bronx in 1948. In response to an invitation from the Rev. David O'Connor, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart assumed responsibility for the boys' department of St. Joseph's Parochial School founded in 1905. In 1948 Brother Albert Guarino was named director at St. Joseph's, and four brothers were assigned to assist him in teaching the 209 students in the boys' division: Brothers Aldric Smith, Joseph Ringloff, Alfred Rodriguez, and Marcel Riviere, who also coached basketball. The Dominican Sisters of the Spark Hill Community managed the girls' division of upper classes and all of the lower classes.

According to the contract which Brother Gilbert signed with the pastor, the brothers were responsible for the boys' department. The province committed

itself to supply a principal and sufficient teachers for the boys in Grades 4-8. The brothers agreed to follow the diocesan school calendar, use diocesan-approved textbooks, and teach the course of studies set by the superintendent. Brothers were forbidden to sponsor any fundraising projects, including entertainments and sales of any type, without approval of the pastor. Also the pastor had final say on the transfer or expulsion of a student. In compensation for their services, the brothers received 10 monthly payments of $100 for each brother working full-time in the school. In addition, the parish furnished a suitable dwelling, maintained it, and paid utilities. The contract was typical for the '40s, and it could be terminated by either party at the end of any school year with at least a five-month notice.

The brothers resided in a two-story house at 1951 Bathgate Avenue across from the school and one door from St. Joseph's Church. The house was comfortable; its 12 rooms were more than adequate for five brothers and allowed for a large dining room and a community room which served also as a prayer room since there was no chapel in the house.



St. Joseph's Elementary School

Brother Aldric Smith assumed the role of principal in 1950 and led the school for three years. Then in 1953 Brother Walter Bluhm began a five-year term as director. During his tenure, the number of brothers at St. Joseph's was reduced to four. Each taught one class from Grades 5-8 with an average of 48 students in each. The house was quiet, and the brothers were not very much involved in the parish or in extracurricular activities. In fact, it was almost a house of studies with Brothers Walter Bluhm, Kenneth Meyers, and Clement Cosgrove all taking courses at nearby universities. In 1956 when the enrollment increased to 250, a lay woman was hired to teach with the brothers since the province could not provide another brother.

In 1958 Brother Kenneth Meyers served as principal, and the number of brothers at St. Joseph's was reduced to three. With the division of the province in 1960, St. Joseph's became one of five elementary schools dependent upon the New York Province for personnel. Brother Joseph Ringloff was named principal in 1960, and he served until the brothers withdrew from St. Joseph's in 1964 for lack of personnel. Unlike St. Luke's in the Bronx, St. Joseph's was not a rich source of religious vocations even though the brothers found the boys docile enough and fairly intelligent. One outstanding graduate from the class of 1953 at St. Joseph's was Brother John Koczka, longtime missionary in the diocese of Meru, Kenya. In Nkubu, Kenya, Brother John has initiated many projects for the advancement of women at Materi Girls' School, which he has administered for the past 20 years.

ST. PHILIP NERI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bronx, New York

In 1949, with a contract similar to the one with St. Joseph's, Brother Gilbert Reuter, provincial, committed the brothers to staff a third elementary school in the Bronx, St. Philip Neri. On September 11, 1949, during the Sunday liturgy, Monsignor William Kelly publicly welcomed the brothers to St. Philip's. The next day four brothers took charge of the boys' department of 193 students in Grades 5-8. Monsignor Kelly, pastor, had been superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of New York when the brothers went to St. Luke's Elementary School, and he liked the fine work that he had seen them do. Brother Fidelis Bragg was named principal and director of the brothers assigned to St. Philip Neri Elementary School.

The school building was excellently constructed and had once been known as "the million dollar parochial school." Located in the Upper Bronx, it was in one of the better sections of New York City. But the school, like most of the others at the time, was overcrowded. Classes averaged 50 students each. Yet based on the success of its graduates at various high schools, St. Philip Neri maintained its good reputation.

The brothers' house was somewhat small, but adequate for four brothers. It was in a quiet neighborhood about three blocks from the parish church and

school. The house had a beautiful chapel; and whenever they could, the brothers found a priest studying at a nearby university and offered him room and board in return for serving as their chaplain.

Working with Brother Fidelis on the first faculty of brothers at St. Philip's were Brothers Aldric Smith, Donald Brady, and Daniel Devitt. The latter quickly endeared himself to the boys by getting permission to use a nearby playing field and organizing a football league. The school curriculum was similar to that at St. Joseph's. The Ursuline Sisters managed the girls' division of the school, and the brothers worked well with them. The brothers were happy at St. Philip's even though the number in some classes reached 57.

After Brother Fidelis's six-year term, Brother Stanley Colin served five years until 1960 when Brother James Chambers succeeded him. The pastor was well pleased with the brothers' work. In 1960 five brothers were assigned to handle the increased enrollment of 225 boys, but the brothers were not able to continue to staff St. Philip's much longer. With the meager salary paid the brothers in the elementary schools, they could not contribute anything to the support of the newly formed New York Province. Nor was the school a source of vocations. In August 1963, the provincial council in New York decided to

St. Philip Neri Elementary School in the Bronx, New York

give notice that the brothers would withdraw from St. Philip Neri Elementary School at the end of the 1963-64 school year because of a critical shortage of brothers. (New York Council Minutes, August 27, 1963)

CHAPTER 34

MSGR. McCLANCY MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Queens, New York

For many years the Brothers of the Sacred Heart dreamed of having a high school in New York. In 1946 Brother Martinian Pauc, anticipating the possibility, paid $150,000 for about five acres of vacant property on 31st Avenue in Jackson Heights, Long Island, in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Economic conditions in the province delayed the plans until 1954 when Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, found the amount of money necessary to build, thanks to the total support and cooperation of Bishop Thomas E. Molloy of Brooklyn.

Construction began in January 1955. Bishop Molloy, who was most eager to have the brothers conduct a high school in the Jackson Heights area, pledged $600,000 toward the $2 million school and residence. Actually the diocese contributed $830,800, and the province borrowed $1 million at 3.5-percent interest to cover the construction which amounted to $2,002,239 with furnishings. The new school stretched for two city blocks on 31st Avenue between 71st and 73rd streets. At the suggestion of Brother Martin and with widely expressed approval, the school was named in memory of Monsignor Joseph McClancy, who had died in 1954. He was not only a friend of the brothers, but an outstanding educator who served 40 years, from 1915 to 1954, as superintendent of Catholic education in Brooklyn. It was Monsignor McClancy who first suggested that the Brothers of the Sacred Heart open a high school in Queens, and he was instrumental in helping the brothers obtain both the property and the funds to build.

The brick school was three-stories and contained 23 classrooms, a cafeteria able to seat 300, various offices, a library, and a number of science labs. The school was built to accommodate 1,000 students. The construction at McClancy included two other buildings: a brothers' residence designed to house 28 brothers in private rooms with semiprivate baths and a large auditorium-gymnasium with a seating capacity of 1,200. The residence contained a large chapel, a spacious community room, a dining room, and a kitchen. Covered walkways connected the brothers' residence to the school on the first and second floors. A large athletic field was located behind the school and residence.

Monsignor McClancy Memorial High School in Queens, New York

Monsignor McClancy Memorial High School opened its doors for the 1956 school session with seven classes for 280 freshman boys. Tuition was $300 for the year, plus a $10 registration fee. Brother Clement Cosgrove, who had recently obtained a doctoral degree in education from Fordham University, was named the first principal. The faculty included six brothers and three laymen. Brother Bernardine Leanman was director of the brothers' community. The first year proved a difficult one because the building was not quite finished when classes started. Brother Clement found himself swamped by the many activities associated with running the school. Reminiscing on that first year at McClancy, he recalled, *"I not only handled all the office chores without the aid of any secretarial help but also taught for two periods and prefected all the recess periods. I also handled the bus and subway tickets, took care of the attendance records, and collected and recorded all the tuition."* (McClancy 25th Anniversary booklet, April 25, 1981)

Brother Eric Goguen became director-principal in 1957. He oversaw the completion of the landscaping and prepared the school for its dedication, presided over by Bishop Bryan McEntegart on May 15, 1958. Over 2,500 visitors participated in the open house that preceded the blessing of the school.

From the very start, Monsignor McClancy High School offered a strictly academic course of studies. Religion, English, science, mathematics, modern languages, social studies, and Latin formed the core curriculum. The school was accredited by New York State University Board of Regents and the Catholic

University of America. The brothers quickly organized extracurricular activities. Besides the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, these activities included drama, glee club, yearbook, a science club, and a Latin club. A strong emphasis was placed on athletics. An intramural sports program involving half the student body included track, softball, volleyball, handball, basketball, bowling, and football. McClancy also joined the Catholic High School Athletic Association, and its Crusaders soon competed in interscholastic sports such as baseball, basketball, cross-country, and track.

Adding one grade level each year, the school grew rapidly, drawing students from about 100 Catholic parishes in Queens County and Brooklyn. The number of brothers on the staff increased from seven in 1956 to 26 by 1959. In 1960 Monsignor McClancy High School graduated its first class, which numbered 123. Brother Clement, the school's first principal, delivered the keynote address. Also in 1960 Brother Eric, principal, was named provincial of the New York Province. Brother Reginald Lavell succeeded him as principal. Monsignor McClancy High School was well on its way to becoming one of the most outstanding boys' Catholic high schools in New York, and for its 40 years of existence since 1956, McClancy has continued to excel as a Brothers of the Sacred Heart school.

CHAPTER 35

BISHOP DUNNE HIGH SCHOOL

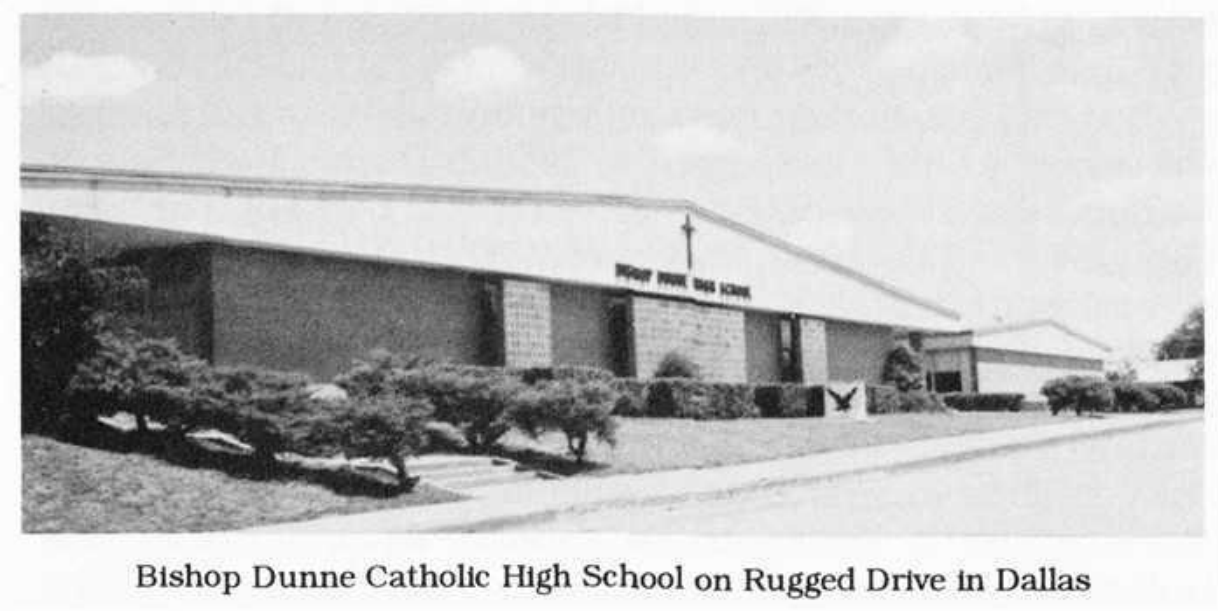
Dallas, Texas

At the urgent request of Bishop Thomas Gorman of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth and with the insistence of the superintendent of Catholic schools, the Rev. Edward Maher, in June 1958 the provincial council began studying the possibility of accepting a co-institutional high school in Dallas, Texas. According to the contract which the council accepted in August 1958, the province committed itself to supply brothers to teach and manage the boys' division of a new school scheduled to open in 1961-62 in the Oak Cliff section of Dallas. Brother Martin Hernandez, provincial, practically dictated the terms of the contract which were accepted by the bishop and by Mother Devota, provincial superior of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, who would manage the girls' division.

The diocese agreed to furnish a site with at least 15 acres for the boys' division and to build the high school with separate wings containing 12 classrooms for boys and 12 for girls and with common wings for science labs, a library, gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, and chapel. In addition, the diocese agreed to construct a brothers' residence in keeping with Brother Martin's stipulations: 12 private bedrooms with a wash basin in each room; six semiprivate bathrooms connecting two bedrooms; three bedrooms with a private bath, one of the bedrooms with an office adjacent to it for the local superior; a community room and library of about 500 square feet; and a recreation room of about 400 square feet. Besides the usual dining room, kitchen, pantry, and storage rooms, a reception parlor and a brothers' chapel to seat 20 persons were requested by Brother Martin and accepted by the diocese. Finally the provincial asked that all buildings be air-conditioned, that the diocese completely furnish both the school and residence before the brothers' arrival, and that the diocese insure everything.

For Brother Martin the most important item in the contract was that *"the brothers reserve the right to conduct the boys' department according to their own system of curriculum and discipline and reserve the right to accept or dismiss students according to their judgment."* For its part, the diocese was delighted that the brothers and sisters not only committed themselves to supply sufficient personnel to staff the school but also assumed all financial responsibility for its operation and maintenance. Thus, on August 27, 1958, Brother Martin and

Bishop Thomas Gorman signed a contract between the Brothers of Sacred Heart and the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth.



Bishop Dunne Catholic High School on Rugged Drive in Dallas

In May 1961, the province announced that Brother Martin, former provincial, would be principal of the boys' division of the new school, which was then called Our Lady of Good Counsel. The school opened as scheduled in September 1961 with an enrollment of 586 students. The faculty of 34 members consisted of five Brothers of the Sacred Heart, 14 Sisters of St. Mary, one Cistercian priest who served as full-time chaplain, and 14 lay men and women. The boys' division began with 122 freshmen boys and added a new class each year. The girls' division, however, had all four classes since the new school was a continuation of Our Lady of Good Counsel girls' school started in 1903 by the Sisters of St. Mary.

The new school grew and prospered, gradually becoming a hallmark of education in Dallas. The program of studies at OLGC was college-preparatory with emphasis on the liberal arts. From its start, the school had its share of good scholars. In 1963, 18 freshman and 14 sophomore boys were honored for achieving superior grades in tests sponsored by the National Education Development Testing program. The brothers introduced the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart and by the second year had enrolled 35 freshmen and 15 sophomores in the organization. Two laymen, Messrs. Robert De Crosta and Jess Arceneaux, who worked with the five brothers in the boys' division, started a sports program. On its vast 38 acres of land, the school had ample athletic facilities: four baseball diamonds, a football field, and a track, as well as a large gymnasium.

In 1963 Bishop Gorman announced that the name of the school would be changed to Bishop Dunne High School. Bishop Edward Joseph Dunne, a native of Ireland, had taken charge of the Diocese of Dallas-Fort Worth in 1893 during its second year and led it for 17 years. With the change of the school's name came a change of mascots. Athletic teams became known as the Falcons rather than the Lions.

When Brother David Toups became principal in 1965, there were 11 brothers at Bishop Dunne. According to Brother Hubert Bonnette, provincial, they were all overworked: *"Practically all the brothers have too much to do. The brothers and the school suffer. This is due to the fact that the contract with the diocese requires that we have the financial and maintenance burden of the school and residence. In order to realize some revenue for the province, the brothers take upon themselves too many duties. . . . More help should be hired for the good of the school and the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of the brothers."* (Provincial Report, January, 1966) By 1966 there were 330 students enrolled in the boys' division of Bishop Dunne, and four laymen worked with the 11 brothers in that division.

Brother Hubert first met with Bishop Gorman in 1965 to discuss the difficulties that the province was having to staff and operate Bishop Dunne High School under the current contract. The bishop referred him to the Rev. John Meyers, diocesan superintendent. Brother Hubert met with Father Meyers several times to explain the province's shortage of personnel and limited finances. Brother Hubert asked that the brothers be put on a salary and that the diocese assume financial responsibility for the school. The diocese took no action, however, and the situation grew more acute each year. When Brother Hubert made out the assignment lists, he had to decrease the number of brothers in Dallas to nine in 1967 and to eight in 1969. He wrote to the bishop several times offering to meet with him personally to explain the various charts which he had sent him to illustrate the personnel and financial picture of the province. Brother Hubert suggested several alternatives in his letters to the bishop. But the bishop always referred him to Father Meyers, who was very gracious, but who was not authorized to take action to alleviate the situation.

Meanwhile, the brothers continued to do exceptional work in the school. In 1969 Bishop Dunne High School was transformed into a completely coeducational institution with Brother Adrian Gaudin as principal of the entire school which by then had an enrollment of 732 students. Under his skillful leadership and that of Brother Anthony DuRapau, assistant principal and director of the brothers, Bishop Dunne High School moved to innovative programs such as flexible modular scheduling. Academic excellence was

emphasized. Working in conjunction with the Dallas Junior College system, college professors taught some of Bishop Dunne's seniors, enabling them to earn college credit while still in high school. Bishop Dunne High School students always made a good showing on the Standard Achievement Tests and a significant number of them became National Merit Scholarship semifinalists and were awarded scholarships.

With the availability of a resident chaplain, the campus ministry department sponsored a retreat program for all students and faculty members. Activities such as drama, dance, and art flourished. Service clubs and academic clubs enhanced Bishop Dunne High School's reputation, which was excellent in the Dallas community, not just for its quality programs, but for the values that the brothers instilled. An editorial in the *Oak Cliff Tribune* drew attention to the strong impact that the brothers had in Dallas: *"The spirit, discipline, the attitude and the goals of Bishop Dunne have created an exceptional center of learning. Qualified students of every race and every color have been welcomed at Dunne. While Catholic students were in majority, a very substantial percentage of protestant families were also represented in the student body each year. The racial mix approximated the percentage of the browns and blacks found throughout Oak Cliff. The brothers emphasized that Dunne was no haven for segregationists during the turmoil of school busing decisions. Yet the Catholic school remained an institution dedicated to traditional morals, values, and disciplines."* (May 20, 1976, p. 6)

The editorial was written in 1976 as the time for the painful withdrawal of the brothers from Dallas drew near. The 1975-76 school year was the last for the brothers at Bishop Dunne. After 1973 only five brothers served in the school even though the enrollment had grown to 862 students. In 1975 the provincial council decided that the province could no longer supply personnel for Bishop Dunne High School.

The five brothers in Dallas in 1975-76 Brothers Adrian Gaudin, Anthony DuRapau, Patrick McGinity, William McCue, and William Chester had all hoped that the provincial council would find some other solution to the acute personnel crisis it faced. Brother Mark Thornton, who succeeded Brother Hubert as provincial, had announced the council's decision to the brothers and then to the bishop in October 1975. Brother Mark found the decision to withdraw the brothers from a school very painful to make and had asked the entire province to participate in the discernment process. Brother Mark met with Bishop Thomas Tschoepe, who had succeeded Bishop Gorman, and Sister Caroleen Hensgen, SSND, superintendent of diocesan schools, to explain the council's decision.

In November 1975, Mr. John Tushim, president of Bishop Dunne's school board, wrote Brother Mark asking that the provincial council reconsider its decision. He explained: *"Dunne is not exclusively Catholic or caucasian. We have an ethnic/religious mix unlike any other diocesan school in the city. Our position is unique and must be managed very carefully. The situation we enjoy under the present administration of the Brothers is more than an educational experience it has become a way of life for the students. Each child is given the opportunity to live and learn in an atmosphere of dignity and peace."* He went on to praise the brothers: *"It is more than the professional competence displayed by the Brothers that has been impressive, it is the manner in which they have approached their responsibilities that has endeared the Order to the Dunne community. The patience, understanding, and unselfishness that have been the hallmark of the administration for the past many years is the thing that will be missing if they leave, as well as the confidence of those who have great love for our school."* (Letter, November 10, 1975)

Touched by Mr. Tushim's letter, Brother Mark agreed to meet with him and the school board. On December 11, 1975, a special meeting was held in the Tower Room of the Top of the Cliff in the Oak Cliff Bank Building. Following supper, board members and special invited guests presented Brother Mark with various proposals to take back to the provincial council. They included such possibilities as allowing two brothers to remain for one more year, taking the total financial responsibility off the shoulders of the brothers, and putting finances in the hands of the school board. Brother Mark expressed his appreciation to the group and promised to notify the board of the council's decision before January 10, 1976.

Pressed for manpower, the council felt it had no choice but to affirm its earlier decision and withdraw the brothers from Dallas as scheduled. The students at Bishop Dunne, in an expression of their deep appreciation for the five brothers at the school in 1975-76 and in recognition of the 35 brothers who had served in Dallas during 14 school years, dedicated the 1976 yearbook, *The Mitre*, to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The students at Bishop Dunne High School expressed their deep regard for the brothers, who taught them true respect for themselves and others. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart left Dallas with many fond memories.

CHAPTER 36

BROTHER NORBERT CENTRE

Alokolum, Uganda

The story of the brothers' first 50 years of missionary work in Uganda and Kenya has been told in Brother Geoffrey Kerwin's *Reflections: East Africa The Harvest, 1931-1981*. By 1981 the New Orleans Province had only two missionaries left in Africa, Brothers Elliot Couvillon and Joachim Parr. In its Resolutions 19 and 23, the 1982 Provincial Chapter determined to revitalize the province's missionary work in Uganda by encouraging more brothers to volunteer for the African missions and to resume recruiting in Uganda. But the province was unable to do either at that time. Brother Lee Barker, provincial, explained to the brothers: *"At a recent meeting of the Provincial Council, it was decided that we would not be able to carry through with the goals set last January of sending two additional Brothers to the mission field in Uganda."* (Circular, May 11, 1982)

During the Christmas holidays in 1982, the three United States provinces sponsored the first of several renewal sessions for brothers serving in five English-speaking African countries: Lesotho, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Eighteen African brothers and 11 missionaries participated in the three-week session at St. Dominic's Major Seminary in Lusaka, Zambia. Brother Bernard Couvillion presented topics from the new Rule, and Brother Paul Demers, an ordained brother from New England, led reflection sessions.

In January 1984, the three United States provincials, Brother John-Louis Collignon of New England, Brother Patrick Reidy of New York, and Brother Xavier Werneth of New Orleans, traveled to Roma, Lesotho, in southern Africa to participate in a 10-day leadership meeting. They discussed with the missionaries and African brothers in administration ways of cooperating and collaborating in the African apostolate, as well as better means of coordination and communication between the provinces and districts. The meetings were organized by Brother Marcel Riviere, assistant general, and attended by Brother Jean-Charles Daigneault, superior general.

While in Africa, Brother Xavier visited Lacor Seminary in Gulu, Uganda, where Brothers Elliot and Joachim worked. He met with Bishop Cipriano Kihangire and presented him with a plaque to hang in the Gulu cathedral in commemoration of the brothers' 50 years in the diocese. He also gave the bishop a copy of *Reflections*, the history of the brothers in Uganda and Kenya,

published in 1983 in conjunction with the golden anniversary. It was based on contributions from some of the province's 61 missionaries to Africa since 1931.

The bishop expressed his appreciation for the brothers' work at the seminary, insisting that they stay there. He pleaded for more brothers to help in the ministry of educating future priests. He promised to provide better security for the brothers, but was unable to follow through. The brothers were living in a small residence on the mission compound that was not protected by a fence. During the civil wars which plagued the country, conditions were often tense and dangerous, especially when soldiers entered the mission compound.

After General Yoweri Museveni seized power in 1986 and set himself up as president of Uganda, there was hope that peace would return to the country following more than 20 years of deprivation, repression, and mass murders under Presidents Milton Obote and Idi Amin. Museveni's National Resistance Army dealt a crushing blow to Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Forces in December 1987. But parts of the guerrilla forces held out in the North, not far from Gulu. Brothers Joachim and Elliot remained in Gulu throughout the ordeal. One of Brother Joachim's letters, reprinted in a province newsletter, told their harrowing story: *"On July 2nd, the rebels came into the seminary early in the morning and looted and took 29 of our seminarians, Brother Elliot, a number of sisters (African) the Vice-Rector and a parish priest from across the road. I was sick in bed at the time. When told to get up, I refused and told them if they wanted me to get up, they would have to carry the bed as well. So they left me. Again, they looted the house (it had been looted May 2) and only a few things were returned. Brother Elliot was not shot but he was beaten and he received a fracture in one of the phalanges of the index left finger. He was released the next day with the sisters."* (Newsletter, November 11, 1988)

Brother Joachim did not mention that he was shot at several times, but the gun misfired each time, and the soldiers finally left him. The seminarians returned after 19 days in the bush. They were sent home so parents could see they were unharmed. The brothers endured several more visits by the rebels. *"On August 15,"* Brother Joachim wrote, *"we had another visit from the rebels, they destroyed and looted a lot of the sisters' house and also looted ours again. I and one seminarian were taken. I walked just out of the gate and refused to go further. After a while we were sent back . . . . On September 2, the rebels came again and looted the main part of the seminary. The seminarians hid and were not taken."* In 1989 the National Resistance Army still struggled in the grueling war in northern Uganda. Gulu had become home for 100,000 refugees, many of whom huddled around the brothers' house in Lacor, knowing the brothers would

help them. Many were still there the following year when the provincial made his visitation.

After giving talks in Lusaka, Zambia, at the *Africa '89* renewal sessions, Brothers Bernard Couvillion, provincial, and Xavier Werneth, general councillor, made a team visit to Gulu in January 1990. Brother Bernard wrote to the province:

"We profited from our week in Uganda to undertake with Brothers Joachim and Elliot a complete reassessment of the brothers' mission at Lacor Seminary in light of the recent General Chapter, our last provincial chapter, and the general council's leadership toward refoundation and prayerful apostolic communities. The four of us met twice with the Bishop of Gulu and with key members of his advisory council and the council of the Verona Fathers.

"The result of our discernment is a complete change of our mission in Uganda. The Provincial Council, in its meeting January 24, studied and endorsed the new plan.

"For the past seventeen years the mission given to the brothers by the bishop of Gulu had been to assist in the formation of local clergy. At this time, the local clergy wish to assume full control over Lacor Minor Seminary, yet Bishop Martin Luluga has a strong desire that our province continue its presence in the Gulu diocese begun in 1931. Since the province has no new manpower to send, the only way to guarantee ongoing commitment of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to the diocese is through the recruitment and formation of African brothers.

"Therefore, Brothers Elliot and Joachim have taken on the new mission of recruiting and forming Ugandan Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The brothers will move from their present house on the Lacor compound to establish a new house near St. Joseph Secondary School, Layibi, near Gulu. The new community, Brother Norbert Centre, will be a house of initial formation whose purpose is to help young Africans discern whether they have a vocation to our life." (Newsletter, January 29, 1990)

The Brother Norbert Centre was named in honor of Brother Norbert McAuliffe, founder of the brothers' first mission in Gulu in 1931. This holy man died in Alokolum in 1959. In 1967 Brother Blaise Toups began his tireless efforts for Brother Norbert's beatification. In 1977 Bishop Kihangire, who knew Brother Norbert well, approved a prayer for people to say to obtain favors through Brother Norbert's intercession.

In January 1990, during the visitation of Brothers Bernard and Xavier to Gulu, a group of 30 "old boys," the mayor of Gulu, and other government and police officials organized a meeting to greet the visitors and to testify to the sanctity of Brother Norbert. They requested that the brothers make every effort to further the cause of his beatification. Afterwards, the provincial council requested the Gulu Diocese to begin an official inquiry into the validity of the cause of Brother Norbert. Brother Blaise Toups went to Gulu to work with the diocese in March of 1990. Afterwards, Gulu's Bishop Martin Luluga wrote to Brother Bernard, provincial: *"The special gift of holiness of Brother Norbert was noticeable not only by his old boys but even by the common man. It is my conviction that the Christian virtues that he practiced in this diocese have played a great part in the planting and growth of faith."* (Letter, March 29, 1990)

In June of 1990, Brother John Hotstream joined Brother Joachim in Gulu for a six-month period after Brother Elliot's poor health forced him to remain in the States. The brothers began renovating a house near Layibi Secondary School. They dug a borehole, began work on a wall to enclose the property, and began building a new kitchen. But before they could occupy the house that they had worked so hard to repair, negotiations to renew its lease or to purchase it fell through. In March 1992, the Apostles of Jesus, owners of the house, asked the brothers to return it to them.

The brothers then obtained a generous 10-year lease from the Verona Fathers for their old seminary compound. It was just off the main campus of the Alokolum Major Seminary, which had been built by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart for their formation center and then given to the diocese in 1970 for the seminary. The small compound rented from the Verona Fathers in 1992 was adjacent to the former property of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Alokolum.

It was quite appropriate that the brothers established the Brother Norbert Centre there, not far from Brother Norbert's tomb in the brothers' cemetery. The Centre welcomed candidates who had completed A-levels (equivalent to college freshmen). After a trial period of living with the brothers, candidates continued their training at the International Formation Centre in Lusaka.

In 1990 Brother Anthony Simwinga, the first Zambian missionary to Uganda, joined the staff at Gulu. Also, two brothers from the novitiate in New Orleans, Brothers Louis Couvillon, novice master, and Christopher Sweeney, novice, spent two months helping out at Gulu during the apostolic phase of the novitiate. Brother Chris worked at the high school, and Brother Louis helped screen 17 applicants, four of whom spent two weeks each living with the brothers. In January 1992, Brother Youngson Silavwe from the Zambia-Zimbabwe District replaced Brother Anthony in Gulu. Also in January, two Ugandan candidates from the Brother Norbert Centre, both graduates from Makerere University, went to Zambia to work at St. Francis in Malole before beginning their postulancy. In September 1992, one of them, Lonzino Afeku, became the first Ugandan to enter the novitiate in Lusaka.

The Brother Norbert Centre in Alokolum, Uganda

In early January 1993, after the *Africa '92* renewal session in Roma, Lesotho, Brother Matthias Amos, provincial councillor and former missionary, met with Brother Xavier Werneth, general councillor, and Brother George Poirier, the superior of the Zambia-Zimbabwe District, to discuss the Uganda mission. Brother Matthias then visited with Brother Joachim in Gulu, Uganda, before reporting to the provincial council. Later in 1993, a 10-year agreement involving the Zambia-Zimbabwe District, the New Orleans Province, and the New England Province was finalized and approved by Rome. Through the new administrative structures, Brother Norbert Centre became part of the Zambia-Zimbabwe District which agreed to help staff it. The New Orleans Province pledged continued financial and personnel support to the Centre. According to

the agreement, Ugandan candidates would be affiliated with the Zambia-Zimbabwe District. After making vows, they would be assigned by the district superior to work anywhere with the brothers in English-speaking Africa.

In February 1993, when Pope John Paul II visited Gulu, Brother Joachim, an elder religious in the area, was honored as one of the dignitaries to greet the pope at the airport. Later in 1993 Brother Joachim returned to the States for a much needed rest and a complete physical checkup. Like Brother Elliot, he had spent more than 30 years in Africa, tense and trying years that spanned the civil wars in Uganda.

Brother Francis Fleming, aided by Brother Charles Leo of the New England Province, took charge of the program at Brother Norbert Centre. In 1994 they were joined by two young Zambians, Brothers Anthony Kazembe and Sylvester Chewe, who volunteered for one year of missionary service in Uganda. They taught two periods a day at Negri Secondary School in Gulu, a 30-minute bicycle ride from the Centre. They were appreciated not only by the staff and students, but also by the "old boys" who often stopped to talk to them and express their joy on seeing young African brothers. Brother David Landry, a New Orleans novice, spent the apostolic phase of his novitiate during the 1994 fall semester at the Centre in Alokolum; he taught religion and mathematics at Negri Primary School.

Meanwhile, in 1992, with the help of Brothers Herman Boland and Jerome Lepre, Brother Blaise finished gathering hundreds of testimonials to Brother Norbert's sanctity by those who knew him. They published a well-documented life of Brother Norbert in English as a preliminary step for the official diocesan inquiry. Subsequently Bishop Martin Luluga named the Rev. Mario Marchetti, a Verona priest with experience as promoter of causes of saints, to organize the diocesan process to open the cause of Brother Norbert. Six American bishops wrote letters to Bishop Martin Luluga of Gulu supporting the cause. The Most Rev. William Borders, retired Archbishop of Baltimore and a former student of Brother Norbert, recalled: *"His kindness and tolerance seemed always to be motivated by each person's welfare, whether student, faculty member or parent. He had a dry sense of humor that enabled him to work beyond the foibles of life to the purpose from which everyone was called into existence by God. He remains one of my fondest recollections of my adolescent years."* (Newsletter, April 18, 1994)

In July 1994, Brother Jerome, vice-postulator for Brother Norbert's cause, traveled to Gulu, Uganda, to assist with the official diocesan inquiry which was completed that month. All materials were then sent to Rome to the Congregation

for the Cause of Saints. Brother Fernando Lana, postulator of the cause of saints in the Institute, wrote from Rome in July 1995 to inform the province that the Congregation had studied the documents related to Brother Norbert's cause and had accepted the validity of the diocesan process. Brother Norbert's cause then moved into the next phase before the Congregation might declare him venerable: the writing of his life and *"the heroicity of his virtues."* Brother Lionel Goulet, former general councilor, accepted to undertake writing this special biography, or *positio*, of Brother Norbert.

In December 1995, Brother Joachim Parr returned to Africa after a two-year stay in New Orleans. He joined 55 English-speaking Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Africa to participate in *Africa '95* held December 12-24, 1995, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Brother Ray Hebert from the novitiate staff in New Orleans and Brother Tom Greer, scholastic master in Roma, had been the main presenters at *Africa '92* and they were invited back to lead this sixth renewal session sponsored by the three American provinces and the general administration. After the renewal session, Brother Paul Montero, provincial of New Orleans, joined Brothers Roland Ouellette, the New England provincial, and Joseph Rocco, New York's first councilor, to facilitate a three-day seminar on "The Future of English-speaking Africa." The brothers in Africa decided to move toward one administrative unit for the region of Lesotho, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe by 1998.

After the meetings in Zimbabwe, Brothers Paul and Ray visited the brothers at Brother Norbert Centre in Alokolum. They had much cause for rejoicing because on Christmas Day at the conclusion of *Africa '95*, Brother Lonzino Afeku, the first novice from Uganda in more than 30 years, had made his first vows. Assigned to staff at the Centre for 1996 were Brothers Francis Fleming, director, Joachim Parr, Robert Martineau of New England, and Crispin Kukano from Zambia. Brother Joachim, whose health was weak, died of a heart attack on April 10, 1996. He was buried as he had willed it: in his beloved Uganda next to Brother Norbert at Alokolum where he had given so many years of his life as a missionary.

CONCLUSION

Fifty years of evangelization through education by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart can best be summed up in one word *love*. *Plus Fifty* relates the brothers' successes and failures, their joys and sufferings, their hopes and disappointments during the past 50 years, both from the inside view of the provincial administration and from the external view of the school apostolates. Fidelity to their commitment, an expression of their love for God, was the force motivating the brothers to renew their religious lives following the Second Vatican Council. At the same time the brothers expressed their love for others through their dedication and self-sacrifice as they worked together for a cause greater than themselves: the education of youth in schools of all types.

During the almost constant change following Vatican II, the brothers questioned and challenged certain aspects of their religious and community life, and their honest search led them to a deeper commitment. Never did they falter in serving the cause for which they worked. With faith and hope the brothers followed their charism of teaching youth, even when other ministries such as social work appeared more exciting or attractive. Foreseeing the effects of the decline in their numbers, the brothers began carefully preparing their lay colleagues to administer their schools so that the sacred mission entrusted to them might continue.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart have succeeded so well in sharing their educational mission and ministry that some people question the brothers' future role in their schools. As they celebrate the 150th anniversary year of the arrival of their first brothers in America, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart today remain as committed as ever to the evangelization of youth. They hope and patiently pray that young hearts will catch on fire with God's love and join them in their mission.

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